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CHINESE FORCES ENCIRCLE TAIWAN DURING EXERCISES

The provocative show of force comes days after Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen met US House speaker Kevin McCarthy

29 FIGHTER JETS CROSS SENSITIVE MEDIAN LINE

The aim of the exercises is to test the ability of the Chinese forces to seize control of the sea, air and information, the Chinese media reported. At least 29 Chinese fighter jets crossed the sensitive median line in the Taiwan Strait that separates the island from China. The three-day event will include live-fire drills off China's Fujian coast, which faces Taiwan

ENCIRCLEMENT LINKED TO TSAI'S U.S. VISIT

- Though China routinely conducts drills around Taiwan, encirclement is being seen viewed as a response to Tsai's meet with McCarthy
- China said the operation dubbed "United Sharp Sword" is necessary to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity while Taiwan slammed Beijing for deliberately creating tensions | P9

71
FIGHTER JETS AND SEVEN WARSHIPS ARE TAKING PART IN THE WAR DRILLS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

POLL TREMORS

Ready to work under Kharge as CM, says DKS

KPCC president's statement is likely to create a stir in K'taka's political circles

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president DK Shivakumar, who is in the race for the chief minister's post if the Congress returns to power in Karnataka, on Saturday sprung a surprise by issuing a statement that he is ready to work under All-India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikarjun Kharge if the latter wished to become chief minister.

"He is my leader and AICC chief. I love to work under him (Kharge)," Shivakumar said while replying to a query on whether he would willingly sacrifice the top post if Kharge threw his hat in the ring.

Shivakumar substantiated his statement while highlighting that the eighty-year-old Congress leader Kharge had himself made sacrifices in the past to abide by the party high command's decisions.

"For our state and our country, he is an asset, and I will abide by the decision of the party. He is senior to me by 20 years. I came (to the Assembly) in 1985 and Kharge in 1972. Kharge had resigned as Congress Legislature Party leader at midnight (to switch to national politics on the party high command's instruction to make way for Siddaramaiah to take over as CLP leader in June 2009). He rose through the party ranks to become AICC president, which is not possible in any other party. It is possible only in the Congress. The state unit received the much-needed boost after Kharge became AICC president. So, I will not go against his wishes," he said. P4

For our state and our country, Kharge is an asset, and I will abide by the decision of the party

DK Shivakumar, KPCC president

₹39L worth silver items of Boney Kapoor family seized

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Davanagere

ELECTION officials on Friday seized 66 kg of silver utensils and ornaments worth Rs 39 lakh belonging to the family of Bollywood director Boney Kapoor, husband of late actor Sridevi, at Hebbalu toll checkpost on Pune-Bengaluru NH 48 here.

The articles, packed in five boxes, were being transported in a BMW car from Chennai to Mumbai. During interrogation, driver Sulthan Khan and Hari Singh, who was in the car, did not give proper replies to a team of officials headed by Raghunath.

The Davanagere rural police, who registered a complaint, said the articles belonged to the family of Boney Kapoor. Further interrogation is on.

Drunk man cuts off his pvt parts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

A man slashed his private parts in an inebriated state at Thondalu village in Hunsur taluk on Friday night.

According to sources, Rajashetty (40), a resident of Thondalu, cut off his private parts under the influence of alcohol. As he screamed for help, his neighbours rushed him to the taluk government hospital at Hunsur. The doctors managed to stitch back the organ.

SUKHOI SORTIE

President Droupadi Murmu in a flying suit gestures before taking a sortie on IAF's Sukhoi-30 MKI, at the Tezpur Air Force Station in Assam on Saturday | PTI

CONTRACEPTIVES TO BE USED TO CURB TIGER POPULATION?

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

INDIA may just succeed in controlling population. Not of humans though. But of tigers, as it is planning to use contraceptives to limit their procreation. Relocating them to Thailand is another proposal that is being tossed around. On Sunday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will reveal the exact count of the big cats in India to mark the completion of 50 years of Project Tiger.

Experts say the tiger population in India has reached its threshold level. The numbers are more than what is officially stated as nearly 40% of tigers live outside their reserves. The government is considering using contraceptives besides relocating some tigers to Thailand control their population. "We cannot allow trophy hunting like in Africa. However, we must think of relocating to a sub-optimal reserve and contraceptive use," says Dr Y V Jhala, former dean of Wildlife Institute of India.

There are other ways, too. "I would suggest instead of contraceptives, the revival and strengthening of 32 major tiger corridors. They are the buffer to help tigers move to sub-optimal tiger reserves," says Sameer Sinha, head (conservation) at the non-profit Wildlife Trust of India.

The current situation of plenty is in stark contrast to the early 1970s, when dwindling numbers and global environmental concerns propelled India to launch 'The Project Tiger', on April 1, 1973.

PM Modi to release tiger census report in Mys today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

THE Heritage City of Mysuru has been decked up and security beefed up at the Bandipur National Park (BNP) for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on Sunday to release the Tiger census report to mark the 50 years of Project Tiger.

The mega event will be held at the Karnataka State Open University Convocation Hall. Delegates from across the country and abroad will participate in it. Modi will release the government's vision for tiger conservation during "Amit Kaal" and launch the International Big Cats Alliance, which will help prepare a roadmap for conservation of tigers, leopards, lions, cheetahs, pumas, and jaguars. The Chamarajanagar district administration has set up a helipad and deployed 1,500 policemen at BNP for Modi's visit to the tiger reserve. He will interact with forest staff and felicitate those who have saved injured elephants.

He will also interact with the frontline staff and field directors of tiger reserves.

Although Project Tiger was launched in 1973 in nine tiger reserves, it now covers 52 such reserves with 3,000 big cats. However, Modi's interaction with schoolchildren at Bandipur has been cancelled in view of the Model Code of Conduct. Mysuru city police have imposed restrictions on movement of vehicles from 5 am to 3 pm.

EXPRESS READ

No difference with Oppn parties: Pawar

Mumbai: Reiterating his stand on JPC probe into the Adani issue, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said that since JPC's members will be mostly from the ruling it won't be fair and impartial, and asked the opposition to focus on SC-monitored committee. P8

Dalit woman raped, burnt alive in Rajasthan

Jaipur: A 30-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly raped and burnt alive in Rajasthan's Barmer district on Thursday. The woman, who has two children, suffered about 50% burns. The accused belongs to the same village. P8

Rajagopalachari's great grandson joins BJP

New Delhi: CR Kesavan, great grandson of noted freedom fighter and India's last governor general C Rajagopalachari, joined the BJP on Saturday as the party aims to boost its presence in southern India. He was earlier in Congress.

Ajit Pawar looking to do a Shinde in NCP

SHAHID FARIDI @ New Delhi

NATIONALIST Congress (NCP) leader Ajit Pawar is likely to walk out of the party and join hands with the BJP to keep Maharashtra's coalition government afloat in case the Supreme Court disqualifies Shiv Sena MLAs who had split the party under the leadership of Eknath Shinde last year.

Sources said that Ajit, who had taken all by surprise in 2019 with an early morning oath-taking in alliance with the BJP, is once again working on a similar plan. He has been in touch with NCP MLAs in order to effect an Eknath Shinde-style coup. Though Ajit has denied the plan, sources said NCP MLAs have informed party chief Sharad Pawar about the development.

Sources said there is nervousness in the Maharashtra ruling alliance due to the Supreme Court's observations during the hearing of the Shiv Sena split case. The final verdict in the case is likely to be delivered by the court before May 15 when Justice M R Shah, one of the five judges hearing the case, is retiring. The ruling alliance fears that the verdict may go either way.

Ajit's coup attempt is said to be the BJP's Plan B for holding on to power. The BJP, which has the largest number of MLAs in the state, is reportedly working closely with Ajit.

Sharad Pawar is trying to keep his flock united. Sources said there is no link between Ajit's gambit and Sharad Pawar's critical remarks on the Opposition demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Adani. They dismissed reports that Ajit's actions may have his uncle's blessings.

ITBP gets Israeli martial art Krav Maga training

HAPREET BAJWA @ Bhanu (Panchkula)

THE personnel of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) who guard the Line of Actual Control along the troubled border with China are being trained for the first time in the Israeli martial art technique Krav Maga, a hand-to-hand combat.

After a bloody physical combat with Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh in 2020, which resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers, the need to revamp close combat training was acutely felt, said sources.

A combination of judo, karate, boxing and wrestling, Krav Maga was first introduced in India in 2007 by the Special Protection Group responsible for the prime minister's security. British Special Air Service and the US Marines, too, are trained in Krav Maga.

The martial art focuses on finishing a fight quickly and aggressively while aiming at the most vulnerable parts of the body but avoiding serious injury or death. It is extremely efficient as it was derived from the street-fighting experience of Israeli martial art experts.

HEAT & RAIN WOES

Scientists bat for policy to tackle climate change

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

TWO eminent climate scientists have cautioned against the impact of climate change and rise in temperature over Central India "between 1.5 degrees Celsius and 1.80 degrees Celsius by 2050 and between 2.2 degrees Celsius and 4 degrees Celsius by 2100 and mean precipitation between 11 and 13% by 2050 and 15 and 30% by 2100".

In a research paper published recently, Prof BN Goswami, SERB Distinguished Fellow, Cotton University, Guwahati and former director, The Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), SERB, and Dr Shailesh Nayak, Director, National Institute of Advanced Studies, (NIAS), Bengaluru and Distinguished Scientist, Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), stressed on the impact of climate change on "spatial and temporal variability of monsoon rainfall and increase in extreme situations like floods and droughts." They raised concerns over preparedness for these extreme weather conditions and suggested timely interventions for better monitoring and management.

In a policy brief, 'Climate Change and Indian Monsoon: Implications on Water Cycle', published by NIAS, the authors cautioned against increase in temperatures, change in monsoon patterns, decrease in snowfall and its impact on the Indus basin and rise in extreme weather conditions like last year's floods in Pakistan. "The changes in the monsoon occurring at monthly, seasonal, annual, and decadal scales have major implications on the water cycle and consequently on all water-using sectors such as agriculture, power, biodiversity, urban settlements, etc. Are we prepared to adapt to these changes, which are likely to happen in the next 2-3 decades?"

CONTINUED ON: P5

Future projections related to changes in monsoon patterns, droughts, sea level...Himalayan systems should be translated into policy directions

Prof BN Goswami & Dr Shailesh Nayak

THE NEW SUNDAY EXPRESS | BRIGHTSIDE

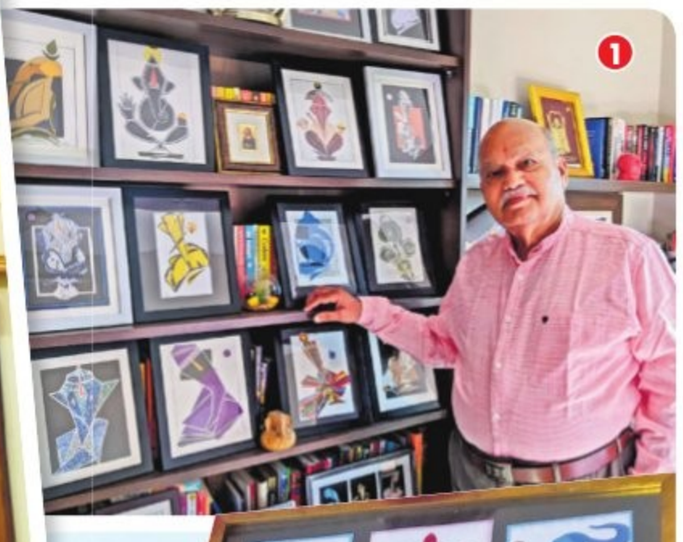
ALMANAC TODAY
• Sunday: 09/04/2023 • Year: Shobhakruta • Ayana: Uttharayana
• Ritu: Vasantha • Masa: Chaitra • Paksha: Krishna • Tithi: Thrutheeya 9.08 am
• Nakshatra: Vishaka 1.38 pm • Moon in Vrischika Rashi • Rahukaala: 04:30 pm to 06:00 pm
• Gulikakala: 03:00 pm to 04:30 pm • Yamaganda: 12:00 pm to 01:30 pm

WEATHER
MIN 19°C | MAX 33°C
FORECAST Sunny

Sunrise 6.11 am
Sunset 6.31 pm
Moonrise 9.28 pm
Moonset 8.16 am

The pandemic era opened the doors to art and creativity for this octogenarian

A GALLERY FOR GANESHA



1: Mattar Prabhakar Kini, 84, a resident of Udupi, stands in front of his shelves of art works; 2: Art Museum curated by Kini; 3: A piece of his art work, and Kini shows the certificate from India Book of Records for the maximum number of Lord Ganesha images in a paper collage form by an octogenarian | EXPRESS

PRAKASH SAMAGA @Udupi

AGE doesn't dictate dreams, nor does age drive the discovery of art. For 84-year-old Mattar Prabhakar Kini, weaving his ideas in adding colour to his imagination through art, is a singular way of expressing and displaying his creative side.

Kini, a resident of Ajjarakad in Udupi, is a great devotee of Lord Ganesha, and much of his art surrounds this much-loved deity. After completing his BCom at MGM College, Udupi, in 1959, he shifted to Mumbai to study further. Later, he worked as a company secretary for a law firm, before starting his own IT trading company in 1985. He moved to Bengaluru in 1998, where he set up 'Sri Ganesha Duniya', an exclusive space at home for displaying his collection of more than 500 Ganesha statues and figurines. Soon, Sri Ganesha Duniya began to attract many curious and fascinated visitors from the neighbourhood.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck, Kini decided to return to Udupi, where he viewed the grim time as being ideal for investing in some creative pursuits. Accordingly, he transformed his flat in Ajjarakad to inspire his work. To keep busy, Kini would purchase magazines and books online. His real dive into art happened when he completed reading those books. The idea of 'art therapy' came to him, whereby he viewed art as dispelling unwanted thoughts during the challenging phase of the pandemic, especially the lockdown. His devotion to Lord Ganesha inspired him to see the deity's image out of every page of the magazine, and an arty idea emerged. He began cutting pages from the magazines into required shapes, which would be pasted together on other pieces of paper to create exotic images of Ganesha. Today, there are hundreds of these Ganesha-themed collages adorning his space. "Creativity is my passion. Apart from spending time reading, you will find me engrossed in making art," he says. Kini spends 3-4 hours on creating each work.

His daughter Vidya Shanbhag, an architect, feels proud of her father's venture into the world of art. "He has a lot of patience, and his love and passion for creativity makes it possible for him to realise his dream," she says.

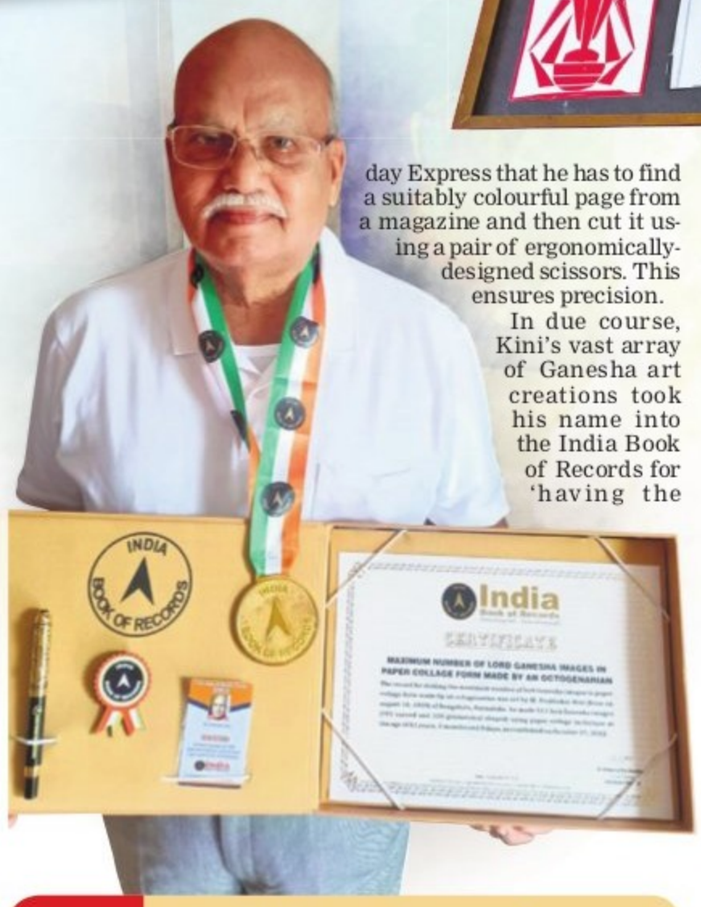
Explaining the laborious process involved in collage creation, Kini tells The New Sunday Express that he has to find a suitably colourful page from a magazine and then cut it using a pair of ergonomically-designed scissors. This ensures precision.

In due course, Kini's vast array of Ganesha art creations took his name into the India Book of Records for 'having the maximum number of Lord Ganesha images in paper collage form by an octogenarian'.

Apart from Ganesha, Kini's collection now boasts of other collages, of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, and Lord Hanuman, among others. Besides collage art, Kini has also created several abstract pieces.

Kini is of the opinion that his art is for the public to savour. Hence, he had organised a free exhibition of his works at his residence recently, which was visited by several art enthusiasts.

Going forward, Kini intends to purchase an old house and create a 'Kala Kuteera' (art house). During the pandemic, though he had shifted to Udupi, he could not keep his entire art collection at his rented accommodation in Ajjarakad. He accordingly readied 'Sri Ganesha Museum' near Sri Venkataramana Temple in Mulki, Dakshina Kannada, which houses over 500 artworks made of metal, wood, clay and fibre. Signing off, Kini dispels any remaining doubts on whether art can be pursued at any age. "I am the example before you," he chuckles.


INDIA BOOK OF RECORDS
India
CERTIFICATE
MAXIMUM NUMBER OF LORD GANESHA IMAGES IN PAPER COLLAGE FORM MADE BY AN OCTOGENARIAN

Creativity is my passion. Apart from spending time reading, you will find me engrossed in making art – Mattar Prabhakar Kini

'Voting Festival' in city to up turnout

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

DISTRICT Election Officer and Chief Commissioner of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Tushar Girinath on Saturday said that the low turnout which has become a trend in the last two elections should be changed.

Speaking at the launch of the Voting Festival in Church Street on Saturday, organised by the Election Commission, Girinath said that the trend can be reversed only if everyone participates and votes.

In a democracy, he said, the primary duty of every citizen is to exercise their right to vote. He pointed that more than one lakh new voters have registered, and they will be exercising their franchise in the upcoming assembly elections, which is a record.

Also 4,000 electoral literacy clubs have been started in colleges to create awareness about voting.

He said that to attract young voters, brand ambassadors have been appointed to encourage them to take part in the exercise, and steps have been taken to prepare a list of those who have attained the age of 18 from the colleges and include their names in the electoral roll.

City Police Commissioner Pratap Reddy, who attended the event, said that Bengaluru is a global city and the target of maximum voter registration has to be achieved.

Voter turnout in the city has been low and the voting festival would improve the rate.

The youth were also requested to encourage their neighbours to exercise their right to vote. People are being made aware about voting through various programmes like bike rally, Yakshagana and flash mob which were organised on Church Street on Saturday.

City District Collector KA Dayananda, Additional Chief Returning Officer Rajendra Cholan and Special Returning Officer AV Suryasen were also present on the occasion.

Volunteers during the 'Vote Fest' campaign launched by the state election commission to raise voter awareness for the upcoming Assembly elections, in Church Street on Saturday (SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA)

Twice a day water for parks sans borewells

MOHAMMED YACOOB
@Bengaluru

WITH temperatures soaring, BBMP held a meeting with horticulture contractors regarding the maintenance of 1,000 parks and gardens in its jurisdiction. The official said that in more than 60 per cent of parks, the Palike has drilled borewells, and in the rest, the contractors are directed to supply tanker water twice a day.

The contractors were also told to collect leaves and send it to the compost unit for manure. In around 500 parks in Palike jurisdiction, borewells have been dug. The contractors have been asked to service them.

Speaking to TNSE, MR Chandrashekhar, deputy director, BBMP Horticulture Department, said this is a periodic meeting that is being held regarding the maintenance of parks and gardens in Palike limits.

"A meeting was held in March-end, and contractors were asked to keep the borewells in parks in a functional condition in advance and arrange water tankers at a few parks twice a day during peak summer in April," said Chandrashekhar.

"Contractors have been asked to ensure tanker water supply for parks and gardens which do not have borewells, and random inspection will be done to ensure that there is no violation of contract. In case of violation, fine will be imposed and the contractor will be barred from future horticulture works," the official said.

Ambedkar's grandson asks Dalits to unite

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

CALLING upon Dalit leaders in the state to gather three lakh people to celebrate Ambedkar Jayanti on April 14, Prakash Ambedkar, grandson of Dr BR Ambedkar said, "It is our responsibility to save the Constitution and the nation. We are relishing the fruits of freedom from the seeds sowed by our forefathers. Now it is our duty to ensure that we protect the rights of future generations."

The national president of Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, Prakash, during an interaction with representatives of the Dalit community and progressive organisations at Gandhi Bhavan, alleged that the BJP is trying to destroy the spirit of the Constitution.

"We should resist it. Members of the Dalit community must unite, and demonstrate our strength to the RSS which is using Narendra Modi as their pawn," Prakash said.

It was also clarified that Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations will not violate the model code of conduct, and informed that if each member gets 1,000 people, it is not a difficult task to gather three lakh.

D Shivashankar, president, SC/ST Government Employees' Association, alleged that the Constitution is under threat. "When the Constitution of India is saved, the people of the nation will also be saved," said Shivashankar.

EXPRESS READ

Bharat Gaurav train to Kashmir from May 11

Bengaluru: Soon, tourists interested in visiting Kashmir can board a direct train from Yelahanka Railway Station under the Bharat Gaurav scheme. South Star Rail, the private service provider for the scheme, will operate the train from May 11. The train originating from Coimbatore with boarding points at Erode, Salem, Dharmapuri, Hosur, Yelahanka, Perambur, Vijayawada, and Warangal, stated a release issue by South Star Rail. The total duration of the tour package is 12 days with a base fare of Rs 41,950 for 3-AC, Rs 54,780 for 2-AC and Rs 64,990 for 1-AC. The train will have AC and non-AC coaches. The tour also includes sightseeing and unlimited South Indian meals. Locker rooms for luggage are also provided in the coaches. A doctor will also be on the train. The fare will also include insurance, bed kit, room rent, meals and beverages, sightseeing and tour manager charges. For booking visit www.railtourism.com or call 9015500200.

Ramp up early intervention centres in dists: Experts

NAMRATA SINDWANI @Bengaluru

EXPERTS stressed on the need to start early intervention for specially-abled children in Karnataka which has 13 District Early Intervention Centres (DEIC), started by the Ministry of Health under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) to improve survival outcomes for children through early identification and management of defects at birth, deficiencies, diseases and developmental delays including disabilities. Care, support and appropriate treatment is provided to children in need to meet these challenges.

Mobile health teams have been deployed under the initiative to screen children for any defects or diseases since birth till they are 18 years.

Former chief commissioner for persons with disabilities in Karnataka, VS Basavaraj said that early intervention across districts would ensure that maximum cases are identified at an early stage and becomes much easier to handle such cases in the initial stages by providing them with the right therapy and training.

In 2020, although six more centres in Tumakuru, Chitradurga, Udupi, Chamarajanagar, Koppal and Yadgir were on the cards under the RBSK programme, they are yet to be implemented.

Basavaraj said that the doctors, working for the project, should also be trained properly since many children have not been identified due to lack of proper diagnosis. They lack the knowledge and skills to identify early signs in a child for any disability or disease in general.

Ruby Singh, vice-president, Autism Society of India (ASI), explained that early screening and intervention of People With Disability (PWD) help provide them with occupational therapy which helps them cope better in a social environment. Late diagnosis impact children emotionally and socially.

A seventeen-year-old girl was trampled to death by a wild elephant on a farm in Somalapura village of Santhebennuru hobli in Channagiri taluk, Davanagere, on Saturday. The deceased is identified as Kavana

'No-fail policy affecting students'

Experts say pupils study less, become laid back regardless of examination scores

NAMRATA SINDWANI @Bengaluru

THE 'no-fail policy' in Karnataka schools have made children very indifferent to exams, say educationists and teachers. Students take advantage of the policy thereby not studying properly and scoring less. For students till 8th standard, a no detention policy is followed in schools where despite poor performance in exams, they are not supposed to be detained in the same class.

The Headmistress of Mother Mary English School observed that students have become very laid back in terms of exam preparation and writing it well, which was reflected in the recent assessments, indicating that students are confident of being promoted to the next grade regardless of their scores.

D Shashi Kumar, an educationist and general secretary for Karnataka Association of Management of Primary and Secondary Schools (KAMS), said, despite the Parliament approving a bill to reverse the "No Detention Policy" under the Right to Education Act in 2019, it is still practised here.

Kumar explained that it is important for students to experience a healthy competition and be able to cope up with stress at every stage in life. Until 8th standard, if a child is promoted without proper assessment, they will face lots of issues during the course of higher education, he added.

Instead of a no detention policy, a child can be given a second chance to appear for exams in case of failing and be detained only if they are unable to score decent marks in the reassessment which will give a fair opportunity for both the teachers and the students to understand the child's ability and performance and guide them accordingly to provide quality learning and better performance in future, Kumar suggested.

Hundreds of residents in LB Shastri Nagar are worried about waterborne infections due to dirty water entering their homes through BWSSB pipes

Dirty water seeps into BWSSB pipes, residents scared

MOHAMMED YACOOB @Bengaluru

HUNDREDS of homes in LB Shastri Nagar in HAL ward are concerned as dirty water entered hundred plus homes following seepage into BWSSB 100 diameter main water pipeline.

The water board officials said, the pipe had been damaged and water from the stormwater drain was entering from Shastrinagar main road and the issue has been fixed. However, residents say the issue is yet to be resolved as the water has not been released to homes.

Syed Rahim, a local leader, said, it's been over seven days and water supply is yet to be restored in many homes at LB Shastrinagar 1st and 2nd Cross. The BWSSB closed the valve due to foul smell and discolouration flowing into BWSSB taps inducing fear of infection among residents.

"The issue could be due to digging of roads by different agencies as well as heavy truck movement. The BWSSB was supposed to supply water with its tankers, but a lot of private tankers are seen, which shows the negligence of the water board on public concerns," said Rahim. Assistant Executive Engineer, HAL Sub-Division, Mudassir said, he personally attended to the problem and detected no sewage and that the water seepage was only through storm water drains.

"The 100-diameter pipeline had an issue when dirty water seepage was detected. It took a few days to rectify and finally, on Thursday, April 6th, the leakage was fixed and supply will be resumed," said Mudassir

About the dug-up stretch that is causing traffic inconvenience, the official added,"It is for BBMP to fill up, level it and asphalt."

Man takes pics of woman at KIA, caught

ENS @Bengaluru

A MAN from Srikakulam in Andhra Pradesh was caught by a 29-year-old woman at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) while he was taking her pictures without her consent, on March 31.

The woman was travelling to Dehradun. She alleged that she was waiting at a coffee shop in Terminal 1 when she saw the accused clicking her pictures. She has alleged that the accused had photographed her private parts.

The police have identified the accused as Ravada Lakshmi Narayana, 40, from Sanivada village of Srikakulam. The incident happened on the midnight of March 31. The complainant, a teacher, is a resident of Bidaraguppe on Attibele Road.

"The woman in her complaint has stated that Narayana who was sitting near the coffee shop at Terminal 1 started taking her pictures on his mobile phone. The complainant claims that she was wearing shorts and the accused had taken the pictures of her private parts. After confronting him, she brought him to the jurisdictional airport police. The mobile phone has been seized and has been sent to FSL for further examination to check if there are any similar contents on his phone," said the police.

The accused has been booked for word, gesture or act intended to outrage the modesty of a woman (IPC 509) and violation of privacy under section 66E of the Information Technology Act. The Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL) police have registered a case.

Child injured in factory, owner booked

PRAVEEN KUMAR @Bengaluru

A GOLGAPPA factory owner, Vasu, is in trouble after a 13-year-old minor boy was badly injured while working on one of the machines. The boy's mother, Sakamma (34), a resident of Channapatana, who was a labourer in the factory located on the Channapatana-Ramanagara Road in Keremegaladoddi in Channapatana Town, had sent her son to inform the owner of coming late for work as she was not well. To compensate for her late arrival, the owner put the boy to his mother's work, who unaware of handling the machine, got his right hand stuck in the machine. On not returning home, the mother went in search of him and saw him crying in pain and immediately rushed him to Victoria Hospital nearby, after which she filed a complaint against the factory owner on Thursday. The police has booked the owner under the Juvenile Justice Act and Child Labour Act.

Sakamma has been working in the factory for the last two months. The victim, studying in eighth grade, was home for summer break and often accompanied his mother to the factory.

SAFETY MEASURE

A health worker takes a swab sample from a participant for Covid testing, ahead of PM Narendra Modi's visit to Mysuru

Airtel told to pay ₹1.55 lakh to customer for unfair trade practice

YATHIRAJU @Bengaluru

THE Bangalore First Additional District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission directed Bharti Airtel Ltd to pay Rs 1.55 lakh compensation, including Rs 5,000 litigation cost, to a customer for committing deficiency in service and unfair trade practice for not activating the sim card provided to him.

Partly allowing the complaint filed by Simha, a short film-maker, scriptwriter and director, residing at Vijayanagar, the commission comprising of president B Narayanappa and Member N Jyothi passed the exparte order, as Airtel did not turn up inspite of issuing notice. The complainant contended that he wanted to port his sim card from Vodafone to Airtel, but Airtel failed to activate it even though sims were three times, disrupting contact with potential investors and other members in his field of business.

The commission declined the contention observing that the entire process of porting his sim stretched less than a month from January 22, 2018, to February 18, 2018, during which the complainant could not have plausibly suffered monetarily "missing the biggest opportunity in his life and appointments with investor". The compensation claimed by the complainant to the tune of Rs 43 crore was irrational, said the commission, adding that he could have resorted to other telecommunication service providers and continued his business.

"We do agree that Airtel has committed deficiency in service and unfair trade practice," the commission said.

2 Bangladeshis with fake Indian passports held at airport

BENGALURU: Two Bangladeshi nationals were caught during immigration check at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) here on Friday, for possessing fake Indian passports and using them to enter the country from Singapore. The duo was handed over to the Bengaluru International Airport Police, who have identified the accused as Liakat Ali and Rizaul Sheikh. The two came to Bengaluru from Singapore on Friday on an IndiGo flight. "At the immigration check, the authorities found that Ali has changed his name in the fake passport as Liakat Sheikh while Rizaul Sheikh has changed his name as Reegan Sheikh," said the police. Further investigation is on. **ENS**

PUBLIC NOTICE

The general public is hereby intimated that my client is willing to purchase the Schedule property mentioned below and the title and revenue documents are forwarded to us by the owners of the property to ascertain their marketable titles and right of encumbrance over the Schedule property, which is more fully detailed to in the schedule mentioned below. Any person / institution / firm/entry/ trust / Board / financial institution or claiming to have any nature of claim / right/title/ interest over the below mentioned properties may file / lodge their claim / objections to the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from the date of publishing this Notice, failing which my clients shall proceed and complete the sale transaction in respect of the Schedule Properties which is free from all kind of encumbrances.

Schedule property

Sy. No. 13/1 measuring 2 acre 7 gunta, Sy. No. 13/3 (old Sy. No. 13/2)measuring 27 gunta, Sy. No. 14 measuring 9 gunta and Sy. No. 15 measuring 12 gunta Totally Measuring 3 Acre 15 Gunta situated at Uttaralli Hobli, Alakabalalu Village, Bengaluru South Taluk. Bounded on

East: Sy. No. 11 and 12
West: Govt. Canal (Kodi Halla)
North: Sy. No.16 and Kodi Halla
South: remaining extent of Sy. No. 13/2

Sri.Ramu Sreekantaiah B.Sc., LL.B., P.G.D.L.L., Advocate,
No.471, Legal Access, 8th B Main, Jayanagar 4th Block, Bangalore-11.
Mobile: 9448117426
E-Mail: legalaccess.ramu@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform all General public that my Client **MR. G NAVEEN KUMAR,** residing at #301, Vishwothma Enclave, 2nd Main Road, Arekere, Bangalore South Taluk is in the process of buying **SCHEDULE PROPERTY** mention hereunder from the original Owner. **Sri. T.KRISHNA REDDY,** #45, 4th Cross Road, 11th Main Road Hongasandra, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk.

If any body or bank is having objections may give in writing to the following address within 15 (Days) from the date of publication of this notice in the new paper.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing **Site No.45, CMC Katha No.101, and BBMP khata No. 101/45,** situated at **Hongasandra Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk,** Presently comes under **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike** Limits, **measuring East to West 40 Feet, North to South 30 Feet, in all measuring 1200 Sq.Ft.,** and bounded on: East by : Road, West by: Site No. 53, North by : Site No. 44, South by : Site No. 46, Along with Ground Floor measuring 1200 Sq.Ft, First Floor measuring 1200 Sq.Ft, Second Floor measuring 1200 Sq.Ft and Third Floor measuring 600 Sq.Ft, Constructed with RCC roofed house built in thereon constructed with Cement and Bricks, Doors and Windows are made out with Jungle Woods with Granite Flooring and with all civic amenities in the Schedule Property

Dr. M Venkataswamy, Advocate,
M V Legal Services,
Terrace Floor, Shiv Kailash Apartment, C M Layout, Adj ITI Layout, Yellukunte, HSR Layout Extension, Bangalore-560068. Ph: 9901026725

PUBLIC NOTICE

THIS is to inform the General Public that our client **Sri.H.N.SRINIVASAIAH,** Son of Late. Nanjundaiah, No.54, "Sri Raghavendra Nilaya", 10th Main, Shivanagar, Rajajainagar, Bengaluru-560 010, is acquiring the Hindi Dubbing Rights of proposed **Kannada feature Film "PRODUCTION No.6"** (under Pre-Production) Starring : Century Star Dr.Shiva Rajkumar, Golden Star Ganesh & Others, Music by: Ajaneesh Lokanath, Director of Photography: Raja Rathnam, Directed by: K.S.Ravi Kumar, Produced under the banner of **M/s. Ram Babu Productions represented by its Proprietor Mr.M.B.Babu (Surappa Babu).** The said rights acquired from its Producer **Mr.M.B.Babu (Surappa Babu) Proprietor of M/s. Ram Babu Productions,** at No.5 (758), 2nd Main, 'E' Block, 2nd Stage, Rajajinagar, Bengaluru-560010.

Under the circumstances our client is giving this public notice with a warning that if any individual or organization intends or made or entered into any agreement for purchase of said Hindi Dubbing Rights of the aforesaid Film (Production No.6) it will be at their own risks and perils and such acts violates/ infringes the Copyrights.

K.RAGHUNATHA
M/s.Ekalavya & Associates
No.2/1, "Sri Datta Arcade" First Floor, 2nd Main Opp.Kanishka Hotel, Gandhinagar Bengaluru-560 009. Mobile: 98450 93529 e-mail: raghunath3663@gmail.com

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WESTERN RAILWAY

CIVIL ENGINEERING WORKS

Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction) I, Western Railway, Pratapnagar, Vadodara-390 004, invites **E-TENDER No.Dy.CE/C-I-PTD-BDRN-EPC-01R. Name of the work: All civil engineering works (Earthwork, Blanketing, Retaining Wall/ Boundary Wall/ Side Drain. Major Bridges, Minor Bridges and LHS/ RUB, LCs. Construction of Station Buildings, Platform, Subways cover over Platforms, Staff Quarters, Passenger Amenities. Circulating Area, approach roads, Offices, Service Buildings, watering. Sanitation. protection works etc. and Supply of 50 mm Machine Crushed Stone Ballast. Complete track works including linking of Track works in connection with Gauge Conversion work between Petlad-Bhadran (22.50kms) of Vadodara Division on Western Railway on EPC Mode. Approximate cost work: Rs. 194,74,06,280/- Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs.97,37,100/- Pre Bid conference:** Already completed. **Bidding start date:** FROM 13.04.2023 TO 27.04.2023. **Physical Submission of all documents listed in clause no 2.11.2:** 05.05.2023, upto11.00 Hrs. **Opening of Technical Bids at venue 2.11.4(i): 08.05.2023 after 16:00 hrs. Note:** Regarding detailed notice containing, Bid Security, eligibility criteria, detailed tender conditions, please visit **www.ireps.gov.in**

Manual offers will not be considered. 0021

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ADITYA BIRLA CAPITAL PROTECTING INVESTING FINANCING ADVISING

Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited

Registered Office: Indian Rayon Compound, Veraval, Gujarat 362266
Branch Office: Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited, Star Avenue No. 1 (78) , 3rd Floor , 6th Cross , Victoria Layout, Victoria Road, Beside Vijaya Bank , Bangalore-560025. 1. ABHFL: Authorized Officer Mr. Ravi KumarYadav Contact No- 7899965229 Mr. Dinesh R, Contact No.-8940544482, and Chirag Lokhande Contact Number- 9773758208
1. Auction Service Provider (ASP):- M/s. Globe Tech Infosystems Private Limited - Mr. Samir Chakravorty; Contact No. +91 9810029933, +91 1244470855, email id- CARE@BestAuctionDeal.com

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor i.e. Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited/Secured Creditor, will be put to sale by auction on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on **29-04-2023,** for recovery of **INR 96,87,563.27/- (Rupees Ninety Six Lacs Eighty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Three and Twenty Seven Paisa only)** as on **09.08.2021** and further interest and other expenses thereon till the date of realization. due to Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited/Secured Creditor from the Borrowers namely **Mr. M Ramesh ,Mrs. Lakshmamma K Yadav and M/s. Sri Fuel Company.**

The reserve price will be INR 63,57,812/-(Rupees Sixty-Three Lakh Fifty Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Twelve) and the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) will be INR 6,35,781.21/- (Rupees Six Lakh Thirty Five Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty One and Twenty One paisa Only) The last date of EMD deposit is 28-04-2023. The date for inspection of the said property is fixed on 27-04-2023 between 11:00 am to 04:00 pm.

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY - All the piece and parcel of property bearing No.1, formed out of Survey No.4,Bytrayanapura CMC Khata.No.1194/1/4/1, situated at Doddabommasandra village,Yelahanka Hobli, Bangalore North taluk measuring East to West 45 feet and North to south 30 feet measuring 1350 sq.ft., the house constructed in $ound floor 6 square, first floor 6 square total 12 square RCC roofing with mosaic Flooring wood doors and steel windows and bounded on the, North by Remaining owners of property, South by Property of Muniyamma, East by Government property, West by Road

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited/Secured Creditor's website i.e. https://homefinance.adityabirlacapital.com/properties-for-auction-under-sarfaesi-act or https://BestAuctionDeal.com

Date: Date: 09-04-2023 Sd/- Authorized Officer
Place: Bangalore Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS
O/o, THE OFFICIAL LIQUIDATOR, HIGH COURT, MADRAS
Corporate Bhavan II Floor, No. 29, Rajaji Salai, Chennai-600001.
Phone No: 044-25271149/25271151, Website: www.mca.gov.in
Fax : 044-25271152, Email : olmadras@gmail.com

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS (ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
In the matter of the Companies Act, 1956
And
In the matter of M/s. Kanna Industries Limited
(In Liquidation)
Company Application No. 95 of 2022
In
Company Petition No. 222 of 2004

SALE NOTICE

In pursuance of the orders of the Hon'ble High Court, Madras dated 31.03.2023 made in **C.A.No. 95 of 2022 in C.P.No. 222 of 2004,** sealed tenders are invited from the intending purchasers by the Undersigned for the purchase of the movable and immovable assets belonging to **M/s.Kanna Industries Limited (in Liquidation)** situated at the places more fully described in the schedule hereunder **"As is Where is and Whatever there is condition".**

SCHEDULE

DETAILS OF THE PROPERTY:

S. No.	Description of the property	Location of the property	Extent of land (in acres) / built-up area	Proposed upset price as per order dated 31.03.2023	EMD 10% of the Upset Price
1.	**Immovable Assets:** 1. Land and Building **2. Movable:** Plant and Machinery and other Movable items (Skeleton)	Developed Plot No. 5 & 6, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Mettur Dam, Salem-636402	**Land:-** Plot No. 5 - 1.82 Acres Plot No. 6 - 1.59 Acres Total - 3.41 Acres **Building:-** 8990 Sq.ft. of built-up area	9,00,00,000/- (Rupees Nine crores only)	90,00,000/- (Rupees Ninety Lakhs only)

2. Cost of Tender Form : **Rs. 1500/- (Non refundable / Not adjustable)**
3. Date of Inspection of Property at Mettur, Salem : **12.04.2023 from 11.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.**
4. Last date for Purchase of Tender Form : **24.04.2023**
5. Last date for submission of Tender Form : **25.04.2023**
6. Opening of the Tenders and Auction before the Hon'ble High Court, Madras : **28.04.2023**

Tender Form, Terms & Conditions can be obtained from the office of the undersigned during any working day between **11.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.** and at the site on **12.04.2023.**

Sealed tenders accompanied by the Earnest Money Deposit by way of Demand Draft drawn in favour of **"The Official Liquidator, High Court, Madras"** should be submitted to the Office of the Official Liquidator, High Court, Madras at the above address. For details of the properties, either log on to **www.mca.gov.in** or contact the office of the undersigned.

The intending purchasers should furnish their name, address, mail id and contact number on the sealed tender cover containing Tender Form and EMD.

The bidders shall be present at the office of the Official Liquidator, High Court, Madras at the above address at 9.30 a.m. on the date of opening of tender forms as indicated above i.e **28.04.2023.** The proceedings shall be held as per the directions of the Hon'ble High Court, Madras.

DATED AT CHENNAI THIS THE 5th DAY OF APRIL 2023.

Sd/-
KEERTHI THEJ.N. I.C.L.S.
OFFICIAL LIQUIDATOR (I/C), HIGH COURT, MADRAS

QuoteExpress
DON'T WATCH THE CLOCK; DO WHAT IT DOES. KEEP GOING › SAM LEVENSON

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE No. TVC/GSU/2/2023 DATED 04-04-2023

Chief Engineer/Gati Shakti/Trivandrum Division, Trivandrum-14 for and on behalf of the President of India invites online tenders for the following works as per tender notice given in our e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in.** The tenderer (s)/contractor(s) to apply for e-tender for WORKS In Trivandrum Division, need to get enrolled in the e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in.**

Sl. No.	Name of Work
1.	Chief Engineer/Gati Shakti/Trivandrum Division, Trivandrum-14 for and on behalf of the President of India invites online tenders for the following works as per tender notice given in our e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in.** The tenderer (s)/contractor(s) to apply for e-tender for WORKS In Trivandrum Division, need to get enrolled in the e-tender portal **www.ireps.gov.in.** and only eligible tenderers in the approved list of RFP will be accepted. **Approx.Value Rs.1524.16 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 912000.00 Period of Completion: 6 months.**
2.	Upgradation of Guruvayur (GUV), Wadakkanchery (WKI), Chalakkudi (CKI) and Tripunittura (TRTR) Railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme; Phase I constructions. **Approx.Value Rs.1560.16 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 930100.00 Period of Completion: 6 months.**
3.	Upgradation of Angamali for Kaladi (AFK), Tiruvalla (TRVL) and Ettumanur (ETM) Railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme Phase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.1428.87 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 864400.00 Period of Completion: 6 months.**
4.	Upgradation of Nagercoil Jn. (NCJ) and Kulitturai (KZT) Railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme Phase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.1155.36 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 727700.00 Period of Completion: 6 months.**
5.	Upgradation of Alappuzha (ALLP), Chirayankeezh (CRY) and Neyyattinkara (NYY) Railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme Phase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.1411.85 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 855900.00 Period of Completion: 6 months.**
6.	Construction of 2 bays of Cover Over Platform of IRS type at Kayamkulam Jn. (KYJ), Mavelikkara (MVLK) and Changanassery (CGY) Railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme Phase-I **Approx.Value Rs.7702.06 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 154100.00 Period of Completion: 12 months.**
7.	Construction of 2 bays of Cover Over Platform of IRS type at Guruvayur (GUV), Wadakkanchery (WKI), Chalakkudi (CKI) and Tripunittura (TRTR) Railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme Phase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.102.69 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 201400.00 Period of Completion: 12 months.**
8	Construction of 2 bays of Cover Over Platform of IRStype at Angamali for Kaladi (AFK), Tiruvalla (TRVL) and Ettumanur (ETM) Railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme Phase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.7702.06 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 154100.00 Period of Completion: 12 months.**
9.	Construction of 2 bays of Cover Over Platform of IRS type nt Nagcrooil Jn. (NCJ) and Kulithural (KZT) railway stations under Amrit Bharat Station SchemePhase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.5134.71 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 102700.00 Period of Completion: 12 months.**
10.	Construction of 2 bays of CoVer Over Platform of IRS type nt Alappuzha (ALLP), Chirayankcczh (CRY) mid Ncyyattinkara (NYY)railway stations under AMril Bharat Station Scheme Phase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.7702.06 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 154100.00 Period of Completion: 12 months.**
11.	Providing Ceremonial Flag at 13 stations (KYJ, MVLK,CGY, GUV, Wk1, CKI, TRTR, AFK, TRVL, ETM, KZT, NYY and CRY) tinder Amrit Bharat StationScheme Phase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.181.67 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 240800.00 Period of Completion: 6 months.**
12.	Construction of 6.0m wide FOB at Angamali for Kaladi (AFK) Railway station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme Phase I constructions **Approx.Value Rs.252.76 Lakhs; Earnest Money Deposit Rs.: 276400.00 Period of Completion: 12 months.**

Construction of 6.0m wide FOB at Angamali for Kaladi (AFK) Railway station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme Phase I constructions

Details approximate value of tender, EMD & Location are given on the e-portal, **www.ireps.gov.in.** For Details of bid submission, please refer to the website portal **www.ireps.gov.in**

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Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar on Saturday said Congress did not cooperate with the government in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. "When developed countries scrambled to manage the Covid pandemic, we tackled it efficiently. But Congress did not cooperate with the government in handling the pandemic," Dr Sudhakar told reporters

'PRESSURE FROM BJP ON AAP CANDIDATES TO WITHDRAW'

EXPRESS Dialogues

TEAM TNSE

AAM Aadmi Party (AAP) state president **Prithvi Reddy** says if people in Karnataka vote based on issues or works, the party will sweep the polls.

"BJP is scared of us and trying to put pressure on our candidates to withdraw. They are desperately trying to disturb our organisation across the state," he said, during an interaction with the *TNSE* editors and reporters. Excerpts.

How is AAP looking at the Karnataka elections?
It is an interesting election. Most political analysts are not looking at the mood of the people. There is one survey that says 46% of Karnataka voters do not want to vote for Congress or BJP or JDS, which means there is an opportunity. They want a change. This does not mean they will vote for AAP. The AAP is looking at the vote bank which other parties or people are not looking at as other parties are looking at traditional ways. We have seen, out of experience in Delhi. In our first election, they said we will get zero seats, we got 28. In the next election, though we had scored 28 seats earlier, the report predicted we will get 5 to 8, but we got 62 seats out of 70. I believe when there is a new kid on the block, it is hard to predict. Our responsibility is to run a good campaign and offer good candidates. We have done that, announced our lists and we are way ahead of other political parties. All three parties here are talking about schools, and hospitals and trying to emulate AAP's work. For instance, 'Mohalla Clinic' is emulated by BJP as 'Namma Clinic' here. They are talking about constructing 24,000 classrooms which are again based on the AAP Delhi government model. Congress is talking about 200 units of power, Rs 2,000 for women ... which is copying AAP. We are the only people who have done it. Political success should not be measured in terms of winning seats. It's about how you are able to change the narrative. Even before the polls, we consider when it comes to change in narrative, we have been successful.

Narratives are fine, what about seats? How many seats AAP is looking for?
As a political party, our responsibility is to give an honest option. We have three parties in Karnataka that are substitutes, as their politics remains the same. The first time when you offer new ideas in a state, it's extremely hard to predict how people will vote. I believe if people in Karnataka vote based on issues or works, AAP will sweep these polls. We have access to a 46 per cent vote share. But the discussion is based on castes and religion. It is sad that at the last moment, BJP got the reservation and voters are confused today because BJP pulled out the reservation matter. We are confident that voters will vote based on issues.

AAP had fielded good candidates earlier. What went wrong?
We were selling an idea. For many people, it was like a dream. Who would have thought there would be swimming pools in government schools? Who would think from a tablet to heart surgery, it would be available free of cost? People believed less then. Even in 2018, when we fought here, the results of Delhi schools, which we had built, were yet to come out. In Delhi, 99.7 per cent of children in government schools passed, and the results were better than private schools. We had Mohalla schools, specialty hospitals and we had a working model. Delhi was like a lab experiment with proof of concepts. What happened in Punjab last year showed that it has the potential to grow outside Delhi and people would start believing. In Karnataka, we have won the mind space and heart space. If this converts into votes, I think we will have shocking results. BJP is scared of us and is trying to put pressure on our candidates to withdraw. They are desperately trying to disturb our organisation across the state.

Many leaders quit AAP. What do you have to say about it?
For every person who quit, many people joined us. Our politics is more about principles than personalities. Kodihalli Chandrashekar was a farmer leader and our intention is not Kodihalli, but farmers. We want to give farmers the power of decision-making, and not fight for their crop price. We have 16 farmers in our list of 140 candidates. How can farmers' voices not be heard? If someone did wrong, we will not accept it. As far as Bhaskar Rao is concerned, I still cannot understand why a person who sat next to me and spoke against BJP's corruption, can join BJP. For that, only he can answer. The party has grown manifold.

Who is your CM face in Karnataka?
We believe that all 224 candidates are potential CM candidates. We do not decide who the CM candidate is, we allow people to grow.

What are the challenges you are facing in building the party at the grassroots in Karnataka?
By nature, we Kannadigas are very accepting. Despite allegations of corruption against the government, people did not hit the streets. I think it takes a little longer while hoping that people have reached the breaking point. This election could be a turning point. But convincing the people is hard while arranging resources, money and people is challenging.

There are allegations that AAP is getting funds from extremist organisations ...
Such allegations are made when parties get thrashed in elections and have nothing to compete on. We are the richest government but the poorest political party. If they have any proof, they can get it probed as they have all the investigation agencies with them. The matter of national security is not a matter of compromise. If anyone is doing anything against the interest of the country, they should be locked up.

What's your take on Hindi imposition?
Absolutely unacceptable. Nationally we believe our greatest strength is our diversity. Not only in Karnataka, but anywhere in the country, we will not accept the imposition of Hindi. From every point of view, a child's learning is best when it's in their mother tongue.

Rahul Gandhi's disqualification seems to have united the opposition parties. Do you think all opposition parties should come together to take on BJP in 2024?
They should come together to take on issues and the mistakes that are happening. What happened to Rahul Gandhi is ridiculous. If they are going to file defamation cases against everything, I don't think there will be any politician who will be out of jail. The speed at which it was done and the fact that a lot of these cases are decided in Gujarat is compromising people's belief in courts. That's very sad. There are far more serious issues to go after. BJP, which claims to be the world's largest party, should have more confidence in their work than trying to finish off small parties like AAP.

Does AAP also have a high command like any other parties?
The decisions regarding Karnataka are left to the local team but to ensure that there is no bias, we have an observer from Delhi. To ensure no wrongdoing, the tickets distribution is done by the political affairs committee as a level of separation is required. Interestingly, Arvind Kejriwal is a man who responds to us speedily. In a small party we have a multiple responsibility and we have an unwritten understanding that we should respond to a message within 24 hours and it applies to all, including me and Kejriwal.

Elections are becoming increasingly based on narratives. Voters are making an 'impressed choice' rather than 'informed choice'. Don't you think it is an unhealthy trend in democracy?
Indians are very emotional and here it is an emotional choice. We do get swayed by narratives. But I think after the advent of AAP, people are talking about basic needs and they relate to that. After Covid, they felt it with regard to the school fees issue. We did not want private schools to cut their fees, but wanted the government to bear it. So, on such issues, I think we also have won the hearts of the people. I believe it will help AAP. The question is whether it will happen in 2023 or 2025. Why I am saying 2025 is because unless AAP comes to power in Karnataka no other governments formed will last longer.

What made you join politics?
I am an accidental politician. I was abroad, came back to India as I missed Indian food, family, and during the Anna movement, got involved as a volunteer and the movement against the mining scam of Reddy brothers in Karnataka was at its peak. I used to visit Freedom Park for the rallies. When the party was launched, I didn't want to join. Meanwhile, the Swedish embassy called 50 politicians from Sweden to Bengaluru for a conversation, which I attended. I was surprised that a boy from an environmental science background was in politics and had a conversation with him. I told him about my background as an educationist and he said my service is just a drop in the ocean. He made me realise that politics is a platform to realise dreams come true on a larger scale. Today, my intervention with the Delhi government helped the education of 20 lakh people, 4.5 lakh children studying entrepreneurship curriculum which I carved out. I wrote back to that boy who inspired me to join politics.

CONGRESS' LINGAYAT STRATAGEM VERSUS BJP'S QUOTA GAMBIT

CONGRESS, which got a headstart over BJP in announcing candidates for the May 10 polls, is facing rebellion in some segments. It looks like a natural corollary. But failure to handle it deftly can damage its prospects, as BJP and Janata Dal (Secular) would try to make most of the situation that is still very fluid. It all may change rapidly once the BJP announces its list.

For now, a look at Congress' list of candidates announced so far indicates that the Grand Old Party is sticking to its plan to win over the dominant Lingayat community. Thirty seven out of 166 candidates are from the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community, and their numbers may increase when the party announces candidates for the remaining 58 seats. In 2018, 16 of the 43 candidates from the community won elections, while its strike rate was better with 26 out of 44 in 2013 polls when Congress came to power with a clear majority. In the 2018 polls, the BJP had done well in Lingayat-dominated seats and JDS in the Vokkaliga belt.

Congress seems to have learnt from its past mistakes when the demand for a separate Lingayat religion proved costly and resulted in the defeat of most of its leaders associated with the movement. Now, the party seems to be carefully working on a strategy that can help improve its prospects in the assembly polls.

Congress sees the 2023 elections as an opportunity to get back the support of the community that had supported its leader Veerendra Patil when he led the party to a landslide victory by winning 178 of the 224 seats in 1989.

His unceremonious removal from the CM post by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had a disastrous impact on the party. Its numbers plummeted to 34 in 1994 polls. That was the election when Janata Dal under the leadership of Deve Gowda got a clear majority by winning 115 seats. BJP made its presence felt by winning 40 seats, a significant increase from just four in the previous polls. After that, the community consistently backed BJP's Lingayat strongman BS Yediyurappa.

After Yediyurappa stepped down from the CM's post in July 2021, Congress has been making concerted attempts to get Lingayats back into its fold. The party is trying to capitalise on the alleged marginalisation of Yediyurappa, who broke down on the stage while announcing his resignation. Former minister and Lingayat leader MB Patil was appointed the Congress campaign committee chief, and the party never misses an opportunity to term Yediyurappa's resignation as a slight on the Lingayat community.

Congress was also hoping to cash in on the demand of Panchamsali Lingayats to be included in the 2A reservation category with a 15% quota. The BJP government managed to defuse the situation and convinced the community leaders to end the agitation after it increased Lingayats' reservation from 5 to 7 %. But, not everyone in the community is satisfied with the government's decision.

The Congress also seems to be carefully working on its caste arithmetic. State Congress leader DK Shivakumar is from the Vokkaliga community, Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Siddaramaiah is a backward classes leader, and MB Patil is the campaign committee chief. The party is making conscious efforts to deny BJP the handle to accuse it of minority appeasement.

Congress insiders hope the party will get the support 0f 30% of Lingayat community voters who had voted for BJP in the last elections, and that would make a lot of difference to its prospects.

Its task, however, is not that easy. BJP is likely to field a large number of Lingayats and is going to polls with Basavaraj Bommai, a Lingayat, as CM, while Yediyurappa is also campaigning aggressively. BJP is also banking on the support from various communities that have benefited from the increase in reservation as well as its attempts to solve the issue of internal reservation among the Scheduled Castes (SC). Taking the Lambani community, which is opposing the internal reservation, into confidence remains a challenge.

In a way, it will be like Congress' efforts to win back a major community versus BJP's reservation gambit along with retaining the Lingayat support base and JDS' efforts to hold ground in Vokkaliga heartland.

At this point, all parties are equally hopeful. In Karnataka politics, one who finishes at the top or first does not necessarily become the CM, unless they get a clear majority. The buzz in the political circles is that JDS leader HD Kumaraswamy stands a better chance of becoming CM if his party wins around 40 seats and BJP or Congress fails to cross the halfway mark. They need to come close to at least 100 seats to give it a shot at the government formation.

All that may be clear on May 13 when the results will be announced. For now, everyone is eagerly awaiting the announcement of BJP 's candidates which is expected in a day or two. That would give a clearer picture of the battle in the offing.

KPCC president DK Shivakumar addresses the media at the KPCC office in Bengaluru on Saturday | SHASHIDHAR BY RAPPA

Cong sees more trouble ahead of its third list

ENS @Bengaluru

EVEN as the rebellion within Congress is yet to settle down after the release of the party's two lists, aspirants waiting for the third list have already started voicing their opinion. Those who got to know that they may miss the bus are coming out in the open against the party leadership.

Members of the Karnataka Rajya Hatagara Lingayata Peetha and their religious heads demanded that the community leader, Dr Malleshappa S Daddenavara, should be given the ticket from Terdal in Bagalkot district. They were against issuing the ticket to former minister Umashri, a loyalist of Congress Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah. They met KPCC president DK Shivakumar with their representation.

The Chickpet constituency too is likely to see rebellion as veteran RV Devaraj, a Balija commuity man, is backed by Shivakumar, former BBMP mayor Gangambhike by campaign committee chairman MB Patil and KGF Babu, who was suspended from the party, by former union minister KH Muniyappa.

Asked about dissatisfaction within Congress on ticket distribution, Shivakumar said he will not pass the responsibility of quelling the rebellion to the party high command, but will handle it himself. He said if the party comes to power, posts in boards and corporations will be given to those who did not get tickets.

He claimed that only winnability counted while selecting the candidates and the internal surveys by the KPCC and AICC were not the sole criterion. Social justice too came into play with subsects of SCs being accommodated proportionate to their population. Lingayats too will get more tickets this time, he said. "It is natural in politics. It is all about sharing power with cooperation. Once our government comes to power, power will be shared. We are asking everyone to be calm. Even before the release of the list there was dissent in BJP," he said.

Rahul's Jai Bharat rally postponed to April 16

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

FORMER AICC president **Rahul Gandhi's** 'Jai Bharat' rally in Kolar has once again been deferred. The rally, which was to be held on April 9 was first postponed to April 10, and has now been put off to April 16. The former Wayanad MP will address a mega rally for the first time after being disqualified as a member of the Lok Sabha following sentencing in a defamation case by a court in Surat .

The decision to hold the rally in Kolar assumes significance as it was where Rahul made the speech in 2019 ahead of the Lok Sabha election that led to a defamation case being filed against him.

KPCC president DK Shivakumar said that Rahul will also inaugurate the Indira Gandhi Bhavan constructed in the vicinity of KPCC office in Bengaluru.

"Congress leaders from across the country will take part in the Kolar rally," he added. Shivakumar said that the rally was postponed in the wake of selection of candidates to fight the May 10 Karnataka Assembly polls and filing of nominations (last date is April 20). "We requested for the rally to be postponed and Rahul agreed," he maintained.

Kharge was in race for CM's post after Cong's 1999 win

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

IN the run up to the May 10 Assembly elections in Karnataka, Shivakumar's statement is likely to spark fresh speculations over the chief minister's post if Congress returns to power. It is likely to bring to the fore the Dalit chief minister issue. It is also being analysed by political pundits as a "checkmate" to Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Siddaramaiah, who did not mince words while expressing that he is seeking the second term as chief minister and that he is contesting the Assembly elections for the last time.

Former Prime Minister and JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda had said JDS would have readily offered support to Congress in the 2018 Assembly elections if it made Kharge its chief ministerial candidate.

Kharge was also in the race for the top post in 1999 when the party came to power, but SM Krishna sealed the deal with the blessings of the party high command.

In 2005, Kharge was appointed Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president but the party did not come to power in 2008 under his leadership, although it put up a good show compared to the 2004 Assembly elections. He eventually became leader of the opposition for the second time.

Now, the billion dollar question is will he return to state politics if the situation demands?

KEEP KMF OFF POLITICS, BRAND WILL BE NO. 1: CM

BENGALURU: With the government facing opposition heat for allegedly trying to weaken the Karnataka Milk Federation's Nandini products in an attempt to bolster Amul, Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai asserted that Nandini will become the top brand in the country, and urged leaders to avoid politicising this issue. Bommai said that Nandini is a national brand and their products are sold in other states. "All steps will be taken to overtake Amul," the CM said. Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar was confident that Nandini is capable of facing any competition, and alleged that Congress is stirring politics in the issue. "Nandini products are the pride. Former CM BS Yediyurappa for the first time gave a subsidy of Rs 2 per litre to farmers, which has been increased to Rs 5. The BJP government has supported Nandini the most," he said. Although there are 16 to 18 private and public sector brands selling their milk products in the state, but Nandini's high quality has still kept it the most preferred brand in the market, he said. "Nandini Ghee is also used in Tirupati prasad. Congress is doing politics in everything," he said. However, Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala called it a conspiracy by the BJP government to "sell off Karnataka Milk Federation to Gujarat's Amul. Nandini loses Amul gains. Bommai government remains mute." Former CM HD Kumaraswamy said people in Karnataka should protect dairy farmers by purchasing KMF products. "The double- engine government must stop sale of Amul milk in the state. Kannadigas must oppose it," he said. **ENS**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will visit Wayanad on Tuesday for the first time after his disqualification as a Lok Sabha member. Rahul will address voters at a public meeting in front of the MP office at Kalpetta

Modi: Do you want graft-free India?

PM gives war cry against family rule and politics of appeasement at Hyd public meet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Hyderabad

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi attempted to hit two birds – the BRS and the Congress – with one stone during his address at the Parade Grounds on Saturday, asking whether the country needed to be made free from corruption or not, and whether stern action needed to be taken against those indulging in corruption or not, no matter how influential they were.

The Prime Minister was addressing a public meeting after flagging off the new Vande Bharat semi-high-speed rail to Tirupati from the Secunderabad Railway Station, as well as 13 new MMTS services, along with Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw, and Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy.

Modi also laid the foundation stones for five national highway projects in the State, infrastructural works at AIIMS Bibinagar, redevelopment, and modernization of the Secunderabad Railway Station, in addition to dedicating the doubling and electrification of Secunderabad-Mahabubnagar railway line to the people. The total cost of the works he inaugurated and laid foundation stones for was ₹11,360 crore.

Addressing the public meeting, Modi launched his strongest-ever war cry against family rule, politics of appeasement, and corruption. He said that the one thing that hurt him was the State government not cooperating with the Centre, "due to which several projects were getting delayed", thus depriving the people.

He requested the State government not to obstruct but instead speed up the execution of the projects. "Our priority has been to work tirelessly to realize the dreams and aspirations of the people of Telangana. But a handful of people are upset with such development taking place here. They are worried that the work has been happening in an honest way. Their brother-nephew rule, family rule, and corruption have nothing to do with the development of the nation. They only want to see their family prospering. In every project, they solicit benefits for their greedy gains. The people of Telangana should be wary of such people. Wherever there is family rule, every form of corruption begins from there," he said.

Modi said that those at the helm of this family rule wanted to control every institution and all the systems, and that they didn't like somebody challenging that control.

"For such family rulers, it is all about who gets how much. They work with three main objectives- making the people praise one family, all the corruption money should come to their family, and the money meant for the poor should be distributed in their corrupt ecosystem," he observed.

Pointing out that many such corrupt parties immersed in family rule had gone to the Supreme Court recently seeking protection against any legal action against them, Modi said that the court rapped them and sent them back.

"When Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas, Sabka Vishwaas, and Sabka Prayaas happen, democracy flourishes, and the poor and the marginalized will be empowered. That was the aspiration of Babasaheb Ambedkar, and it is the true spirit of the constitution," he said.

Union minister G Kishan Reddy presents a statue of Lord Venkateshwara to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public meeting, as Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan looks on, in Secunderabad on Saturday | VINAY MADAPU

Bandi asks KCR to furnish reasons for not attending PM's prog

Demanding that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao apologise to the people of Telangana for not participating in PM Narendra Modi's programmes during his visit to Hyderabad on Saturday, BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar asked the CM to explain the reason behind his absence. Speaking to media after the public meeting at Parade Grounds, Sanjay said a chair and shawl were kept ready for the CM, hoping that he would turn up for the event. "I had requested the CM to attend the programmes, and I even assured him that he will be felicitated by the PM. The CM has continuously been criticising the PM and the Centre for not cooperating with the State government. But in reality, it is the CM who doesn't want development in Telangana," he charged.

BJP MLA Preetam's challenge leads to political turmoil in JDS

BR UDAYA KUMAR @ Hassan

THE Hassan Assembly constituency is likely to witness a tough contest between the incumbent BJP MLA Preetam J Gowda and the JDS candidate, whoever it may be. Preetam has emerged as one of the strongest Vokkaliga leaders in the Old Mysuru region, and has challenged the family of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, who consider Hassan region as their borough, to win the seat from him.

A confident Preetam has said he will win by a margin of over 50,000 votes even if JDS senior leader and Deve Gowda's son HD Revanna contests against him in the 2023 Assembly elections. Revanna seems to have picked up the gauntlet thrown at him and has been working out strategies 24x7 to teach Preetam a lesson. This could be one of the reasons why Revanna demanded the party ticket for his wife Bhavani, party insiders said.

An unlikely fallout of Preetam's statement is that it has triggered a major crisis within JDS and has led to differences between Revanna and his brother and former chief minister HD Kumaraswamy over the selection of a candidate for the seat. This, as also the question over deciding between two Vokkaliga factions of Dasa and Mullu have caused the delay. JDS has till now fielded only Dasa Vokkaliga, who dominate the constituency, and won the Hassan seat previously. This sub-sect issue is typical of Hassan and comes to the fore only during the polls. The candidature of HP Swaroop, who is a Dasa Vokkaliga, has been opposed by Revanna. There is a reason for that. During a preliminary meeting some six months ago, where Swaroop was present, JDS workers had forcefully asked Revanna to announce the ticket for Swaroop. Many youth from the community had rushed towards Revanna and raised slogans in favour of Swaroop. Revanna had felt humiliated as he had never faced such an incident in his political career. That was the day he decided not to give the ticket for Swaroop and started neglecting him, party sources said. To avoid Swaroop, Revanna came up with an alternative strategy to field Bhavani, who has been trying to become an MLA for decades. A few weeks ago, she announced that she would be the JDS candidate from Hassan. Her statement that created a stir in political circles, but embarrassed Kumaraswamy. Later, he convinced Deve Gowda that the ticket should not go to Bhavani, arguing that party workers would not like another member from the party's first family contesting the elections. He also said in public that the ticket would be given to a party worker, indirectly backing Swaroop.

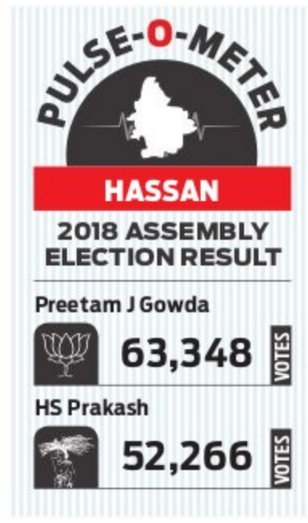
This angered Revanna's sons -- Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna and MLA Suraj Revanna -- who opposed their uncle's interference in Hassan politics, which has been left to Revanna to manage for long. Kumaraswamy refused to react to their statement, and let the cold war with his brother simmer.

As a counter to Swaroop, Revanna also floated the names of KM Rajegowda, the former Hassan Urban Development Authority president, and BV Karigowda, a former MLA. Both are Dasa Vokkaligas, but Revana's suggestion was rejected.

Sources said that when all the family members of Revanna met Gowda in Bengaluru recently, Bhavani touched the patriarch's feet and sought his blessings to contest from Hassan. But when he did not support her, she stormed out of the meeting that was also attended by Kumaraswamy, they added.

An upset Revanna has now started campaigning in Holenarasipur without any of his family members. Party insiders think that if Preetam wins this election too, he will become far too powerful, depleting the political clout of the Gowda family in the constituency.

A party leader said JDS leaders cannot curb Preetam, who has learnt the tricks of JDS leaders. Preetam, a young engineering graduate from a middle-class family, has maintained a good rapport with the people. Before the 2018 Assembly elections, he ensured drinking water supply for affected areas and got garbage cleared at his own cost that led to his victory. The stage is set, one of the major players is ready for the duel and everybody is waiting to see who will be JDS candidate. Caste Equations-Hassan Vokkaligas (Dasa and Mullu) dominate in Hassan Assembly constituency. They are followed by Scheduled Castes and Tribes, other backward classes, minorities and others (Lingayats, Brahmins, and micro-castes).



Experts warn of flash floods

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

THE authors stated that "future projections related to changes in monsoon, droughts, sea level, ocean warming, cyclones, and Himalayan systems should be translated into policy directions to strengthen the response to climate change."

They warned that "further increase in temperature and moisture is expected to lead to enhanced variability in mean, extremes, and interannual precipitation during the next few decades. This is likely to lead to more intense flash floods, especially in the Indus, Ganga, and Brahmaputra basins. The increase in tropical cyclones will lead to increased flooding in coastal areas."

Goswami and Nayak said while increased rainfall in the North West region due to the westward shift of monsoon is likely "to lead to greening of the Thar desert and benefit agriculture, increased flooding in the absence of efficient drainage will affect the socio-economic conditions in the region."

The Indus basin is likely to receive reduced snowfall, which may affect the river flow during summer.

They said, "Reliable information on monsoon is critical for India as 50% people depend on agriculture and contribute about 17% to the GDP. Water availability per capita has been dipping since 1950 due to increasing population." They stressed the need to understand and model changes in rain patterns and how they affect the water cycle, and suggested timely interventions to help plan and mitigate the crises. Some of them are "strengthening of observation networks of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere, cryosphere, and biosphere to increase our capability to generate outputs from predictive and empirical models and setting up and enhancing an integrated climate information system". The same must be linked to understand the impact on human health. They suggested building flood shelters like cyclone shelters in vulnerable regions and recharging of groundwater.

HASSAN TICKET SPAT

REVANNA, BHAVANI MAY FIGHT AS INDEPENDENTS?

BR UDAYA KUMAR @ Hassan

THE new crisis over the JDS ticket in Hassan doesn't seem to be abating anytime soon. Former minister **HD Revanna** seems to have played his final card in favour of his wife, Bhavani, to mount pressure on the party leaders to get her the Hassan ticket.

It is, however, to be seen how JDS supremo HD Deve Gowda handles the situation since his son, Revanna, and his daughter-in-law have allegedly threatened to fight the assembly elections independently. The couple might have brandished the final weapon of fighting in Hassan and Holenarasipur constituencies, respectively, as independent candidates, should the party fail to give Bhavani a ticket. However, Revanna is not silent, despite his brother HD Kumaraswamy often saying that the Hassan ticket will be given to a party worker.

Revanna held a series of meetings with party workers of different capacities to gather inputs and seek suggestions for the future course of action. Revanna chaired an important meeting of senior party workers on Friday in Hassan to seek suggestions if the party did not announce a ticket for Bhavani. Most senior leaders have also reportedly suggested that Revanna and Bhavani fight the elections as independents.

Revanna also stuck to his stand on the lines of Kumaraswamy over the ticket issue. However, he and his wife are in a dilemma to take a decision yet in this regard. Sources close to Revanna said the couple will wait for Kumaraswamy's decision. Revanna's family is reportedly upset with Kumaraswamy's statement, that except Revanna, no other family member can fight the polls from Hassan this time around.

Meanwhile, the repeated statements of Kumaraswamy also allegedly frustrated the couple, forcing them to take drastic steps. On condition of anonymity, a close associate of Bhavani informed that she had challenged family members that she would never withdraw from her decision to contest the election under any circumstances, and would even fight the elections independently, if the party denied her a ticket. Brushing aside reports of independent candidatures, a senior leader said Revanna or Bhavani would never take any harsh decision with the party expecting to win more seats. Revanna refused to comment on the issue, while Bhavani was not available for comment.

BJP looks to Kiran for South prospects

ENS @ Hyderabad

A DAY after he joined the saffron party, the last chief minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh, **N Kiran Kumar Reddy**, was in Delhi on Saturday, where he met BJP national president JP Nadda, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and former Karnataka chief minister BS Yediyurappa. The meeting signifies the importance the BJP attaches to its latest acquisition in the South.

According to sources, the BJP high command has asked Kiran to attract Reddy community leaders from other parties in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka. Kiran hails from the Rayalaseema region and has maintained contact with many senior leaders, including ministers, MPs, MLAs, and MLCs from AP and Telangana, having worked closely with them while in Congress.

The BJP has welcomed many senior leaders from the Reddy community, such as DK Aruna, AP Jithender Reddy, Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, Ponguleti Sudhakar Reddy, Marri Shashidhar Reddy, Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy, and others into the party. Kiran's joining is another example of the party's efforts to strengthen its position in the Reddy community, which is dominant in state politics.

The BJP high command views Kiran's involvement as a good sign for the party's future, particularly as two of these three states – Karnataka and Telangana – are heading towards Assembly polls. Kiran is expected to campaign in Kalyana Karnataka districts like Raichur, Ballari, Koppal, Chitradurga, Tumakuru, Chikkaballapur, Kolar, Bengaluru Rural, and others connected with the Rayalaseema area of Andhra Pradesh.

He is also likely to call his former colleagues from Congress in AP and Telangana and invite them to join the BJP.

TRAFFIC JAM HITS BANDIPUR FOREST

MYSURU: The Bandipur forest witnessed traffic jams for more than 6 km as the Tamil Nadu forest department checked all the vehicles entering Tamil Nadu and collected green tax. The tourists heading to Nilgiri Hills and Ooty were stranded. The Mysuru-Nanjangud road also saw lines of vehicles ground to a halt, as the forest department had announced closure of vehicular traffic on the highway in the wake of the Prime Minister's visit. The police have also banned vehicle movement on the Mysuru-Nanjangud road and the Gundlupet highway, and all vehicles have been diverted via the ring road, and can take T Narsipura to reach Chamarajanagar.

K'taka polls to keep leaders of Big 3 from TS busy

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY
@ Hyderabad

THE three mainstream parties BRS, Congress and BJP will be busy in the next 20 days, with elections approaching in Karnataka in May, and in Telangana later this year.

BRS leaders, including CM K Chandrasekhar Rao, have reviewed preparedness of the party cadres and lined up programmes like the unveiling of Dr BR Ambedkar's statue and the inauguration of the new secretariat complex. Then there is the plenary at LB Stadium on April 27.

Ministers, MLAs, MLCs and MPs are busy in their constituencies mobilising beneficiaries of welfare programmes for Dalits for the public meeting to be held after the unveiling of Dr Ambedkar's statue. The party functionaries are at present busy with Athmeeya Sammelans to sensitise people in villages in favour of the BRS.

TPCC leaders, including chief A Revanth Reddy, will resume his yatra which was postponed on April 10. CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is now on his yatra in erstwhile Adilabad district. The party is likely to organise a massive public meeting at Gajwel, the home constituency of CM K Chandrasekhar Rao on April 25.

Meanwhile, BJP leaders, including state chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar, are planning to tour Karnataka. The party's national leadership has already asked them to campaign in Kalyana Karnataka where there is a sizeable population of Telugu-speaking people. They are planning to visit Karnataka frequently to campaign for the BJP from April 15. Senior party leader and former Minister DK Aruna is already in Karnataka.

I PROMISE...

Temple vow: Case against BJP MLC, MLA for poll code violation

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @ Gadag

AN FIR was filed against a BJP MLC, MLA and the Gadag-Betageri Municipal Council president and other Assembly poll ticket aspirants for using a temple premises for the purpose of election, violating the poll code.

BJP MLC Pradeep Shettar, Shirahatti MLA Ramanna Lamani, GBMC president Usha Dasar, Dr Chandru Lamani, Gurunath Danappanavar and Bheemsingh Rathode gathered at the historical Someshwara Temple of Lakshmeshwara recently, and took an oath that they would not become rebels and follow the party's decision. After some people complained about it, the Lakshmeshwara chief municipal officer conducted a probe and a case has been registered under the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act 1988 (u/s 7) at Lakshmeshwara police station.

In Shirahatti, several BJP workers complained about MLA Ramanna Lamani, and requested state leaders to give the Assembly poll ticket to someone else. Some aspirants said they will support others, if the party fields Ramanna again. As senior leaders realised that this may affect the BJP's poll prospects, they called all ticket aspirants to Someshwara temple and told them to take a vow that they will campaign for the party.

A senior party leader said, "We did not have the intention of misusing the historical temple and all our leaders are devotees of Someshwara temple. If they give a promise on the temple grounds, they will not go against it. Now, an FIR is registered and we will follow the law of the land."

BJP ticket aspirants and their followers from Shirahatti take a vow at Someshwara temple on Saturday | EXPRESS

We do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate

Thomas Jefferson

WHAC-A-MOLE ECONOMICS, RATE HIKES AND PAUSES

THE THIRD EYE

SHANKKAR AIYAR
Author of The Gated Republic, Aadhaar: A Biometric History of India's 12 Digit Revolution, and Accidental India
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YOU could call it a formulaic expression of fuzzy distraction. In a US Senate hearing in 1987, Alan Greenspan who was then the chairman of the US Federal Reserve said: "If I seem unduly clear to you, you must have misunderstood what I said." This column had last June cautioned Brace For Impact: Central Banks Flying Blind. The gap between what is presented by central banks across the world and the policy that is prescribed appears eerily Greenspanese.

On Thursday, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das told Indians that that aggregate demand was resilient, GDP growth was upgraded to 6.5 per cent and that inflation would be at 5.2% -- well above the target of 4%. He then announced that the Monetary Policy Committee had decided to pause on rate hikes and emphasized the "decision to pause is for this meeting only".

It is true that the rumble strip of events haunts the trilemma of managing growth, inflation and financial stability. Managing it oftentimes resembles mastering the modern-day avatar of Whac-A-Mole designed by Kazuo Yamada. The blunt tool of interest rate hikes is playing truant – thanks to the theory of long and variable lags. Rapid rates signal intent but what matters is sustaining levels, the risks of the higher rates for longer construct.

At the end of the day, policy rate prescriptions beyond the verbiage are judgment calls and a pause to assess impact is conceivable. What is mystifying though is the articulation – the repeated assertion of conditional pause. Arguably, the MPC is well-placed with facts and models to take a call. What is the logic behind "pause for this meeting only"? Is there something which the RBI awaits (the Fed action in May) or knows something which enables a view of how the economy will play out in the coming months and the year?

It is no secret that inflation has been above the target of 4 per cent – even above the tolerance level of 6 per cent – in the past year. Is 5.2% okay? Is a rate of 5.2 per cent for March 2023 okay? Is the RBI signaling, a la Michael Spence, that it is okay with a higher level of inflation? History shows that higher growth rates are enabled by low inflation – for instance, China averaged low-sub 4% inflation for two decades to deliver high growth.

The RBI has not done well with forecasts in the past. That raises the question of how credible is the forecast of CPI at 5.2% – given the uncertainties of geopolitics and oil prices. In April 2022, the RBI came up with a curious construct "to remain accommodative while focusing on withdrawal of accommodation" and projected inflation at 5.7% for the year 2022-23. It updated its forecast months later. India ended the year with inflation at 6.8%.

Inflation in India, beyond government borrowings, liquidity and rates, is also defined by monsoon and agri-commodities prices. There is suspense about the possible ramifications of the El Nino impact on this year's monsoon which could influence food price inflation. Already India, the world's largest producer of milk is importing milk products. The supply-demand balance calls for policy action. This is challenged by fault lines in allocation and utilisation of funds to prevent disease among cattle and in expanding dairy networks. The Standing Committee's report on Agriculture and Animal Husbandry presents a sad saga of apathy across state governments.

The acceleration in credit growth is a good thing but it is also a fact that deposit growth has lagged in part due to the delayed transmission of higher rates for savers. An argument has been made by folks at the RBI that real interest rates -- that is the difference between inflation and current interest rates -- would be in positive territory. This is scaffolded by the forecast or belief that inflation will not rise, inflation will slide or that banks will align returns for savers.

There are many moving parts defining the future given the "unprecedented uncertainty" Governor Das pointed out. India has historically benefited from higher global growth. This week the IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva observed that thanks to the fragmentation, global growth will dip below 3% this year and will stay around 3% for five years. Indeed a World Bank report points out that forces that powered growth are fading and that "between 2022 and 2030 average global potential GDP growth is expected to decline by roughly a third from the rate that prevailed in the first decade of this century — to 2.2% a year."

The unknowns in the two largest economies –growth in China and asset valuations in US markets– will determine the flow of capital and output. In the US, the markets are in a tizzy as fear competes with hope. Rising rates impact asset values. The easy money regime advanced the cause of real estate bets and profit-less enterprises -- funded both by public and private markets. Any crack in the markets will have a significant impact on capital flows, trade and currencies.

Finally it is useful to remember that uncertainty is the base case in economies. There is no disputing comparative merit but it is how India maps the scenarios which will matter.

IT'S THE TIME FOR HOT-TIP SULTANS

OPINION

SANTWANA BHATTACHARYA
Editor

OLD Mysore is where they say it will be decided. In recent times, even those who tout 'paradigm shifts' in the world of business management like to put a coating of grand myth on unenlightening boardroom struggles and such like. Mysuru, whose self-definition is framed within the mythical struggle between Mahishasura and Chamunda Devi, lends itself to such 'talking up'. It's the heart and soul of Karnataka, in a way. So what is a dusty, gory assembly election contest can get elevated as a do-or-die battle that will decide the fate and future of Karnataka, the nation and Indian civilisation itself.

To some extent, even such outsize propagandising contains something of the truth. In Ramanagara, closer to Bengaluru on the highway, the famous Channapatna toy-makers do a decent variation of the Russian nesting dolls. One wooden doll within another, going from the biggest to the smallest. In exactly one year, we will be plunged fully into the heat of general elections, and what happens there will surely not be irrelevant to how India shapes up. Working backward from that logic, or taking out the smaller doll each time, we can make our way back to Old Mysuru. But why is it in the eye of the vortex? For one, it's the stronghold of three prominent aspiring chief ministers—D.K. Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah and H.D. Kumaraswamy. Toss in the film-star son of the last-named, putting some extra garnish into the campaign trail, and you have a battle gladiatorial enough to suit Mysuru's storied past.

And how each of the three contesting forces fares here—the incumbent BJP, the challenger Congress and the local turf defender JDS—will surely tilt the balance of numbers in the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru. That's why local intellectuals like V.K. Nataraj, former chairman of the Madras Development Institute, and political scientist Muzafar Asadi mostly converge on what's often stated as a straight-up equation, 'Whoever wins Mysuru will win Karnataka.'

Of course there are other determinants. The Lingayats of the north are said to be more of a floating population these days, rather than a fixed bloc wedded to saffron via the good offices of ex-CM B.S. Yediyurappa, and the Congress candidate list clearly evinces an interest on that front. So perhaps a tinge of local pride colours the statements on the primacy of Mysuru. But the triangular contest in this belt does reveal the micro-dynamics of the state polls.

Traditionally, this Vokkaliga-dominated belt used to witness a straight fight between the JDS and the Congress. But the concerted inroads by the BJP have upset the logic of that innocent past. Unlike coastal Karnataka, a BJP anchorage point with a sharp communal divide, Mysuru still retains an old-world flavour that still recalls the relatively progressive, egalitarian bent of the Wadiyar Maharajas. Make no mistake though, Narendra Modi is nonetheless popular here.

In Varuna, from where Siddaramaiah is now contesting, a mixed group of youth—surprisingly including many from the Lingayat community—holds forth on how the assembly polls and the 2024 Lok Sabha are unconnected in their minds. Only for the latter, they will reserve their votes for Modi—for reasons "national and international". The assembly is about local issues—here and now, bread and water, raw and real. Questions of ideals and identity animate that too, but not in a way unconnected to the ground. New Delhi is a remote palace of dreams to which you can still send your contributions, while coping with livelihood issues here.

This inner flux—individual and collective minds in an unsettled pattern of Brownian motion—does not make it easy for any of the three claimants to power. The Congress has to wean away a considerable chunk of the 30 per cent Vokkaliga votes from the JDS, while retaining a strong imprint on the Kuruba, Dalit and Muslim vote (9.78 per cent, 24.5 per cent and 8.35 per cent respectively) to have a reasonable shot at the 51 seats in this belt, inclusive of Bengaluru Rural. Depending on how you

define the Mysuru belt, others count 70-odd seats. Either way, it's a good quarter or more of the 224-seat assembly.

The JDS hit the road first. H.D. Kumaraswamy's yatra, which has touched nearly 5,000 villages, is a sort of dogged comeback trail—how well his tough territorial defence holds up one end will make or mar things for the other two. The BJP has tried to consolidate the restive Lingayat votes, its mainstay in Karnataka, through reservation, added an outreach to the Kurubas and a section of the Dalit community. The consolidation for the Congress can only happen if the trio of DKS-Siddaramaiah-Kharge join forces.

The buzz is, if the JDS gets around 30-35 seats, Karnataka may again see a hotchpotch result. Either of the other two does well, the next five years will theirs. For the BJP, there are other variables—it's a test of voter loyalty. That's why in Central and Bombay Karnataka, it's putting its entire might—in the shape of the usual Modi-Shah carpet-bombing—to keep its flock together. Stray reports also hint at a slight breach in its coastal bastions, where the Congress is showing an uptick. Hyderabad Karnataka is a prestige battle for Kharge, even though it might not be quite the swing factor as Mysuru. And the 28 seats in Bengaluru's greater metropolitan area punch way above their weight. The Congress used to have a good footprint here, but the BJP has cracked it of late.

Away from the statistics, Karnataka has always been an arena that yokes the local and the national together and brings them into vexed negotiations. It is a speech in Kolar that has led to Rahul Gandhi's disqualification, opening up a debate on democracy and free speech. This is an election where the fading local memory of Nehru-Gandhi loyalties would be put to test perhaps for the last time. This is a state, after all, where it's famously recounted that a voter in a Chamarajanagar village had to take the permission of his fellow villagers to vote for the Janata Party and not Indira Gandhi—and his was a lone vote. Old anecdotes about Indira and her mesmerising hold over the voter psyche have not disappeared entirely into history's oblivion. This is also the first southern state where Atal Behari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani were hosted and funded by old RSS/Jan Sangh supporters like the Shettys who ran the Thippaiah hotels. One generation of pan-Karnataka leaders—BSY, Kharge, Deve Gowda—too are at their old game, campaigning and strategising, for perhaps the last time. Above all of them, like a hologram, Modi is looming large. As for Nehru, no one talks about him on the ground, except Ram Guha. The sword of Tipu Sultan, with its hilt gripped by the other side now, too makes no cut on the ground he used to rule at one time.

WHERE IS MY WALKING SPACE IN THE CITY?

POWER & POLITICS

ANURADHA GOYAL
Author and founder of IndiTales
(Tweets @anuradhagoyal)

'WALKING around' is my most beautiful memory from my few days in cities like Vancouver, Victoria or London. You can walk a few blocks for everyday needs, work, or admire the surroundings or seasons.

Walking is also my favourite way to explore a destination, especially in the mornings. Of the 15-odd cities and towns I have lived in India, the most walkable were the army cantonments I grew up in. Panaji in Goa is perfect for walking. You can walk along the river or market without the nearby traffic bothering you. Unfortunately, the hot and humid weather with long monsoons is not walk-friendly.

Gangtok is another walk-friendly city. Its walkways at the edge of its hilly roads let you walk uninterruptedly with a clear view of the Kanchenjunga range of the Himalayas. Despite the hilly terrain, the city has given respect to the people who love to walk. Chandigarh, the city I grew up in, was very walk-friendly until our lust for cars overtook all the empty spaces.

In big cities, people drive to local markets less than 500 meters away. The time and energy spent finding parking need to justify the errand. My septuagenarian parents living in NCR have a simple answer – walking is unsafe. They are right. There is hardly any walking space, traffic is too aggressive and pedestrian space, if any, is infringed upon.

In Bengaluru, a city blessed with lovely weather to walk, one evening, I walked to a temple about 2 km from my home. It was a nightmare, with traffic coming from all sides. The narrow footpath needs help accommodating the trees, the chai shops and their customers, and the eateries and waste. At every intersection, you need to get down, cross the road and step up on the pathway or whatever is left.

The techies with huge backpacks rarely realise that they occupy thrice the space and can potentially hit someone whenever they turn around. Taxis are parked half on the footpath and half on the road. Two-wheeler drivers are talking with their phones in hand, and the army of delivery boys zoom past.

It was dark on my way back, so I had to be extra careful of the garbage, the stones lying around, and the vehicles yet to switch on the headlights. I was walking between the shining well-lit corporate offices on either side but had zero streetlights on the walkway. The concept of zebra crossings is alien in this coveted startup district of the new-age Bengaluru.

In my head, I reached home safe and sound because I was chanting Hanuman Chalisa all this while. This is not satire. More than 30% of traffic deaths and 80% of road causalities are that of pedestrians on our roads. While some may be at fault, most die or suffer due to others' negligence or failed urban planning.

In a country with an age-old tradition of walking – be it for pilgrimage or daily chores of life -- when and why did we lose all our walking space. Why do we think cars need more space than those walking around?

Pedestrians do not contribute directly to the economy... The same goes for cycle lanes promoted by the cycle industry. Infrastructure is where the money lies

Walking, to me, is meditation. You get meditative as your feet move in a rhythmic motion, your mind starts calming down, and ideas emerge from the deep recesses of your subconscious. It is the easiest way to stay healthy, minimising the need for gym or wellness coach subscriptions. Walking together is a great way to bond with neighbours and friends. The best way to explore a destination is by walking. You engage with every nuance, decide your pace as you feel, and stop whenever something piques your interest.

Think about all the pollution we can avoid and the health we can gain if we stop using our vehicles for, say, less than a 1–2-kilometre distance. I hope someone commissions a study to put it in numbers. All that pedestrians need is a safe and clean space to walk. Initiatives to reclaim vehicle-free public spaces like Happy Streets in Bengaluru and Sunday Streets in Mumbai give some hope. But we need this 24X7 for daily life, not just a couple of hours a week.

Pedestrians do not contribute directly to the organised economy as the automotive industry does. The same goes for cycle lanes promoted by the cycle industry. Infrastructure is where the money lies for all those who depend on taxpayers. The poor pedestrians want the space left to them as it is.

Smart City's mission statement includes walkability as a parameter. Eight per cent of its budget, over Rs 20,000 crore, is allocated to create walkable localities. This is far lower than allocated for parking, roads and transit infrastructure, somewhere telling you the importance of walking. It also clubs walking with cycling, which means walkers would lose space to infrastructure for cyclists. Finally, how much of it translates to reality is yet to be seen.

An ideal walking space would be free of traffic, aesthetically designed, well-connected, well-lit and easily accessible. It can have some space to socialise – remember the village chaupal under a tree, a cultural hub maybe. It may seem like a dream at this point, but if we do not ask for it, we will never get it. Those who took away our walking spaces lobbied well for it. Can the walk-loving citizens lobby to reclaim it back?

QUOTE CORNER

I never thought anything like this could happen in America, never thought it could happen. The only crime that I have committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it. It's an insult to our country

Donald Trump, Former President of the USA

In a country where the President expresses himself in Pif (children's magazine) and his minister (Marlene Schiappa) in Playboy, the problem would be the opposition. France is going off the rails

Jean Luc Mélenchon, Former French presidential candidate

They [China] seem to like doing it, circling Taiwan like it's theirs. I am used to it now. If they invade, we can't escape anyway. We'll see what the future holds and go from there

Michael Chuang, Taiwan citizen

MAILBAG WRITE TO letters@newindianexpress.com

Zero session

Apropos 'Finding meeting ground imperative after wasted budget session' (April 8). Instead of zero hour, we have witnessed a big zero Parliament session where all the bills and budget were passed with no discussion. The blame game between the treasury and opposition for the zero session was over Rahul and Adani issues only. The ruling and opposition in both Houses of Parliament are equally responsible for the sad state of affairs.

Parthasarathy Mandadi, Tirupati

Pawar's stand

NCP chief Sharad Pawar is known to have a mind of his own and can hardly be expected to meekly toe the line even where a vital issue like the opposition unity is concerned. ('Opposition cracks as Pawar raps JPC probe call on Adani,' April 8). The seasoned politician is apparently distraught that too much weightage is being given to Hindenberg. It is a different matter whether Pawar's views will find favour with other opposition parties but his stand remains clear and unambiguous.

C V Aravind, Chennai

Common candidate

Apropos 'Unity compulsions in the opposition camp' (April 8). The article narrated how the Congress party has slowly diminished from mountain to small hillock during the course of time. Though the combined opposition feels fortified that a joint front would confront the mighty saffron party in the parliamentary elections, definitely people would expect a common candidate from the joint front equal to the profile of PM Modi.

K Jayanthi, Chennai

Anil Antony

The move of Anil Antony from the Congress to the BJP is indeed a major embarrassment for his dad and senior Congress leader A K Antony. The fact remains that any person is free to choose his political allegiance. After all, did not the senior Antony distance himself from Indira Gandhi during the turbulent times in the past? What is even more laughable is the statement of a CPM leader that Anil Antony joining the BJP is shameful to the country.

C M Umanath, Calicut

Sudeep's support

Celebrities like KicchaSudeep should not involve themselves in politics simply because they entertain us and leave politics to the professionals. The celebrities are uneducated about politics and do not know what they are talking about. They have a right to have their own beliefs and express them, but they should do this responsibly.

Aditya Kamble, Kalaburagi

Covid situation

Apropos 'Ramp up tests, says Govt as Covid19 cases climb' (April 8). AP seems to be in a better position as it registered only 267cases during the last two weeks while 15,096 tests were conducted. The state health minister has sought 20 lakh booster vaccine doses from the Centre. People are also adhering to Covid-appropriate behaviour in the state.

K Nehru Patnaik, Visakhapatnam

Hurt feelings

It is deplorable that the RSS chief has wilfully hurt the feelings of Indian Christians by criticising the yeoman and selfless services rendered by Christian missionaries to Indian society. I'd like to ask him: Is it not Christian missionaries who pioneered social reforms in India and gave English education? (Bhagawat's good Friday message: Hindu saints known for services. April 8)

PH Hema Sagar, Secunderabad

Bipolar voters

Apropos Unity compulsions in the opposition camp (April 8) Modi's entry into national politics marked the end of unstable or weak rule by multi-party alliances. That means while regional parties can concentrate on local Assembly polls, pan-India parties alone must be elected by voters during Lok Sabha polls.

Jayashree Thampi, Thiruvananthapuram

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TWEETS OF THE DAY

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra @priyankagandhi
@narendramodi: Are you aware of the involvement of Chinese companies in important sectors of the country through Adani? Public wants answers

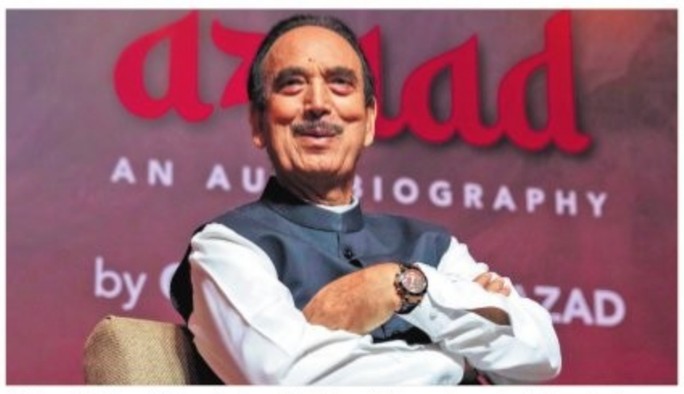
Mahua Moitra @MahuaMoitra
Country-specific passports for Kashmiris? Can the BJP hope to govern us while denying rights to 200 million Indians because they are Muslim?

Shobha Karandlaje @ShobhaBJP
Congress Karnataka chief is threatening to cancel quota giving by BJP state govt to Vokkaliga, Veerashaiva Lingayat, SCs & STs, if voted to power

'There isn't an iota of democracy in Congress'

Ruling out any alliance with the BJP, Ghulam Nabi Azad says it is the Congress that is giving BJP a free run

PREETHA NAIR @Chennai



Ghulam Nabi Azad during the launch of his autobiography earlier this week | PTI

Democratic Azad Party founder **Ghulam Nabi Azad**, whose autobiography 'Azaad' has now hit the stands, IN a candid conversation with **Preetha Nair**, speaks about his former colleagues in Congress, Kashmir, Adani issue, Opposition parties and other key issues.

The just concluded Budget session was a washout. Do you think the Opposition was justified in their demand for a JPC on Adani row?
Both sides were not ready to budge from their positions. One problem is at themoment the Opposition is not united. What I have seen this past nine years while I was also a LoP (Leader of Opposition) is that BJP is adamant about not setting up a JPC probe, though we demanded it on several issues. They have flatly refused. Their policy is not to have a JPC. If the government is adamant about not having a JPC, then the Opposition should have suggested something like a Parliamentary Committee of 20 or 30 members from both sides, headed by a Opposition memeber. The government can't say no to everything. So, it should have been decided on the floor.

Knowing that the government will never have JPC, why didn't you allow Parliament to function?
If Parliament does not function, it is the government that would be the happiest.

Q) The Opposition, including Congress, says Adani-Hindenburg is a critical issue as public sector companies like LIC, and SBI are involved.
But we have other concerns also. We have to define a difference. Is a poor man in the street bothered about Adani? The Adani issue won't resonate with the voter. How does it affect a farmer in Andhra, Tamil Nadu, or Kashmir?

Why do you think Congress is not doing the right thing by running a campaign against Adani?
I don't have a phobia of individuals. Some people have had a phobia of Modi and Adani for the last nine years.

Do you think criticism is allowed in BJP?
There is not an iota of democracy in Congress.

Do you blame it on the coterie?
Coterie is everywhere. But ultimately the leader should have his mind.

Do You mean Rahul Gandhi?
Naturally. We were also leaders. Coteries were misleading us also. If the leader is guided by the coterie, that means he is nothing.

But you have written Rajiv Gandhi listened to you while making decisions...
When I was the President of IYC, Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister. she sent me two names to be made the general secretaries. In writing, I refused that they cannot be adjusted. If I had said no to Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi, the next day I would have not been there. Even Sonia wouldn't have tolerated it if I said no to the people she recommended. I would still say Sonia Gandhi is amiable. Now the consultation process has entirely derailed.

In your book you said some excesses might have happened during Emergency, but they were conveniently placed at Indira's and Sanjay's doorsteps. Are you defending Mrs Gandhi?
Only two things went wrong in the Emergency. The Opposition leaders should not have been jailed. And there should not have been a ban on the media. Otherwise, production went up. There were no strikes. There were positive and negative parts. And the negative aspect went against Ms Gandhi. Sanjay Gandhi was mostly blamed for the forceful sterilisation drive. Ultimately, it all proved a hoax.

> Nothing has been done by the BJP on the Kashmiri Pandits issue. The Congress government has done much more for Pandits. I still hold the view on Article 370 shouldn't have been abrogated
>
> Ghulam Nabi Azad, former MP

You have written about how you handled the situation in Parliament post-Babri Masjid demolition as a Parliamentary Affairs Minister.
The Opposition wanted the PM to go as they held (Narsimha) Rao responsible for the Babri Masjid demolition. The most important thing was that both the PM and HM were not available while the demolition was taking place. So that was something very, very fishy and very suspicious. Ultimately in the evening, the Cabinet was called. Though we all expressed our anger. Unfortunately, in that routine way, they both went to sleep after lunch, and that was not the time to sleep. I took opposition into confidence and I told them that let the Home Minister go. But I could not fulfill the promise because the PM and HM both dodged me.

In your book you have spoken about how you took on Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesari.
During Indiraji's time, we could give any suggestion. During Kesari's and Rao's time, criticism was tolerated. With the current leadership, if you write one letter, you are out, immediately dropped.

What is your view on abrogation of Article 370?
I would say nothing has been done by the BJP on the Kashmiri Pandits issue. The Congress government has done much more for Pandits. I still hold the view on Article 370 shouldn't have been abrogated.

Is there any possibility of allying with the BJP after the elections in J&K?
There is no question of allying with the BJP. It is all made up of the Congress leaders. It's their brainchild. Congress is helping BJP more than me. BJP is there because of Congress. They are giving BJP a free run by not doing anything. Congress is no different from BJP.

'KICHCHA' SUDEEP

JACK OF ALL, HE MAKES TRYST WITH POLITICS

ASHWINI M SRIPAD

SOURAV ROY

"I did understand the text you sent in Hindi. That's only because we all have respected, loved and learnt Hindi. No offense sir, but I was wondering what the situation would be if my response was typed in Kannada.!! Don't we too belong to India, Sir?" noted actor Sudeep, much known as 'Kichcha' Sudeep had tweeted in response to Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn stating that Hindi was India's national language.

Exactly a year back in April 2022, Sudeep had taken on Devgn who had tweeted Hindi is India's national language. Followed by this, people across the country from non-Hindi belt had poured their support for Sudeep. Devgn had tweeted in Hindi tagging Sudeep and questioned the actor about dubbing non-Hindi films in Hindi. "Hindi is our and always will be our national language," Devgn had earlier tweeted. This led to an exchange of words between the two actors on social media platforms. Sudeep had stood for the language, Kannada, and his stand was well-appreciated across non-Hindi states.

NEWSMAKER

Another popular Sandalwood actor, Darshan, and Sudeep, who were once close friends, fell apart a few years ago over personal reasons. Both acknowledged there was no friendship between them. But, in December 2022, a footwear flung at Darshan at Hospet by fans of late actor Punith Rajkumar at a promotional event, attracted Sudeep's open criticism and condemnation of the act. He tweeted: ":Darshan has significantly contributed to Kannada Cinema. We might not be on talking terms. But this incident made me sad...". Being in the field for around 27 years, and known as a stylish icon, Sudeep was never associated with political parties although he was approached by many. However, his connection with Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, whom he calls "Mama" (Uncle), made him openly announce his support for the former.

"I have known Bommai Mama since my struggling days in the field. That time I did not know him as a political person. He just stood by me. I will not forget this, and this is why I am here to support him. Wherever he says, I am going to campaign," he said openly at a recent press meet in Bengaluru.

"I am a citizen of this country, I pay my taxes, and as a citizen, I like certain stands taken by PM Narendra Modi. I am not here to contest polls," he added. However, this has not been accepted by many, including his followers, although Sudeep said he would have done the same to anyone who stood by him during his struggling days, irrespective of the political party they belonged to.

Hailing from Shivamogga, Sudeep belongs to Valmiki Nayaka community which falls under the ST category. The BJP-led government in Karnataka has increased ST reservation quota to 7% from three per cent. The government even passed a new reservation policy. The BJP roped in Sudeep, expecting to tap the strong vote base in central Karnataka where Valmiki caste members are more in numbers.

In November last year, Sudeep was appointed ambassador for the State government's 'Punyakoti' scheme pertaining to cattle adoption. An engineering graduate, who was passionate about movies, Sudeep is the son of a successful hotelier and businessman, Sanjeev Manjappa. Sudeep, who is himself a good cook, plunged into Sandalwood in a supporting in Thaayavva in 1997, and in 2000, he was in a lead role in Sparsha. In 2001, his performance in Huchcha, in which he was called "Kiccha", earned him the nickname Kichcha by his fans. This movie gave him name and fame overnight.

Since then, Sudeep has acted in several blockbusters in Kannada including Kempegowda, Bacchan, Varadanayaka, Vishnuvardhana and Manikya. He is also a producer and director.

Sudeep's debut in Telugu cinema in 2012 was Eega, directed by noted SS Rajamouli, gained him wider popularity. He has also acted with Salman Khan in Dabangg 3.

The popular reality show Big Boss in Kannada is also hosted by the actor. He also runs Kiccha Sudeepa Charitable Society, which works for underprivileged schoolchildren. He is married to Priya Sudeep and has a 19-year-old daughter Sanvi.

An avid cricket fan — and a cricketer himself — Sudeep is a right-hand batsman and a wicket keeper, who is also the captain of the Karnataka Bulldozers, a cricket franchise of Celebrity Cricket League (CCL), but is currently busy with three movies on his hands and set to get busier campaigning when the political scene heats up before the May 10 assembly polls.

Extradition of Gupta brothers: UAE rejects South Africa's request

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THIS seems to be the favourite modus operandi for business tycoons. Loot and scoot to a third nation which then refuses extradition. It is now the turn of South Africa.

The UAE has turned down her request to extradite Saharanpur born tycoons **Atul** and **Rajesh Gupta** who have allegedly siphoned off billions of dollars through fraud under the Jacob Zuma Presidency in South Africa.

"In the evening of 6th April we were provided note verbale from UAE in which we learnt with shock and dismay that the extradition hearing had been concluded in the Dubai court on the 13th February and our extradition request was unsuccessful. The reasons for denying it are of technical nature," according to a statement released by South Africa's ministry of justice and correctional services.

The UAE government notified South African authorities on Thursday that the court had ruled in February that the Guptas could not be handed over despite an extradition treaty between the two nations.

The money laundering and fraud is considered South Africa's biggest post-apartheid scandal.

"UAE's approach is inconsistent with article 17 of the UN Convention Against Corruption – to which both South Africa and UAE are signatories," South Africa's justice department's statement added.

The Gupta brothers whose businesses ranged from mining to media moved to South Africa in 1993 and during the Presidency of Jacob Zuma rose to fame as becoming amongst the wealthiest in South Africa.

However, fraud and money laundering charges made the duo move to Dubai in 2016. In 2022, following an Interpol red notice they were arrested in Dubai. Extradition talks have been held between South Africa and UAE ever since.

Covid cases rise across India; yet mask adherence is low

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

ONLY a small section of people are wearing masks in the country even though India has seen a surge in Covid-19 cases in the last week, a survey has found. The country reported over 6,000 cases in the past two days after over 200 days of the pandemic waning across the globe.

Of the 9,656 people surveyed in 321 districts of India, only six percent said they were "effectively complying" with the masking norms, 90 percent said they were not following the norms, and four percent gave no clear response.

Of the six percent who were complying with masking, the largest segment - 45 per cent - indicated that they wear a mask when in crowded outdoor spaces; 35 percent shared that they avoid going to crowded outdoor spaces like weddings, sports events, and others.

In the survey by LocalCircles, India's leading community social media platform, 20 percent shared that they avoid going to crowded indoor spaces like malls, restaurants, trains, buses, etc.

Also, 15 percent said they have been wearing a mask in indoor spaces with people outside their immediate family.

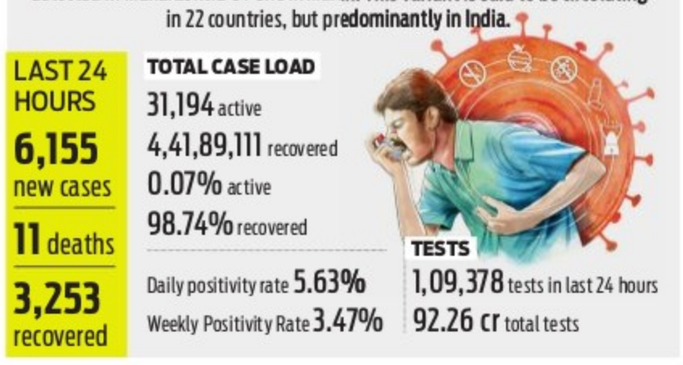
Though the centre has not announced any mask mandate yet, some states have taken some proactive steps. Puducherry is the only state that has made masks mandatory in public places, while Haryana made masks mandatory for gatherings of more than 100 people amid uptick in Covid cases.

Experts said that the mask mandate sends a strong and clear message to people that they are the best protection at the time of a surge.

"When mask mandates are in effect, it will reduce the total number of bad outcomes from this fast spreading respiratory virus. Two other benefits of masks include protection from influenza as well as worsening air pollution," said Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, co-chairman of the National Indian Medical Association (IMA) Covid-19 task force.

"Masks are one of the few effective tools we have against the pandemic," he added.

Speaking with this paper, Sachin Taparia, Founder, LocalCircles, said that "the survey found that the effective mask compliance at a pan India level is at an abysmal 6%, and most don't even have a mask with them any longer, let alone wear it."


COVID SCARE AGAIN?
The sudden surge in India is triggered by Omicron sub-variant XBB.1.16, first detected in Maharashtra's Pune in March. This variant is said to be circulating in 22 countries, but predominantly in India.
LAST 24 HOURS
6,155 new cases
11 deaths
3,253 recovered
TOTAL CASE LOAD
31,194 active
4,41,89,111 recovered
0.07% active
98.74% recovered
Daily positivity rate 5.63%
Weekly Positivity Rate 3.47%
TESTS
1,09,378 tests in last 24 hours
92.26 cr total tests

Updated Sukhad Yatra app of NHAI with more features in the offing

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

THE National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is set to upgrade its Sukhad Yatra, a mobile application (App), which provides road quality-related information and enables highway users to report any accident or pothole on the roads.

The upgraded version is likely to have a slew of new features such as information of fuel stations, wayside amenities, hospitals, banks, and police stations along the highways and details of important stretches — expressways and state highways.

The revamped app will also provide information on road accidents, road under-maintenance status and blind spots.

The idea is to upgrade Sukhad Yatra mobile app as a worldclass unified platform for highway users in India for road related information or services with a strong in-built highway grievance redressal and escalation mechanism, said officials.

The app will also help in locating parking facilities, dormitories for drivers, miner workshops for repair along with air filling station, spare parts shop, helipads for emergency evacuation, tourist sites and will also be equipped with weather forecast facilities.

It will have the option to check real-time status of road blockage or accidents between the source (origin station of the journey) and destination. Another mechanism to alert or send a notification to the users if they breach the prescribed speed limit is also proposed.

The parliamentary standing committee on transport, tourism and culture has recently recommended adding more services to the mobile application and improving complaints escalation and redressal mechanisms.

The 31-member panel of parliamentarians headed by YSR Congress Party MP V Vijayasai Reddy also suggested NHAI to ensure that the app is available in Hindi and other regional languages to facilitate more users. The mobile application developed by NHAI's IT division was launched in 2018.

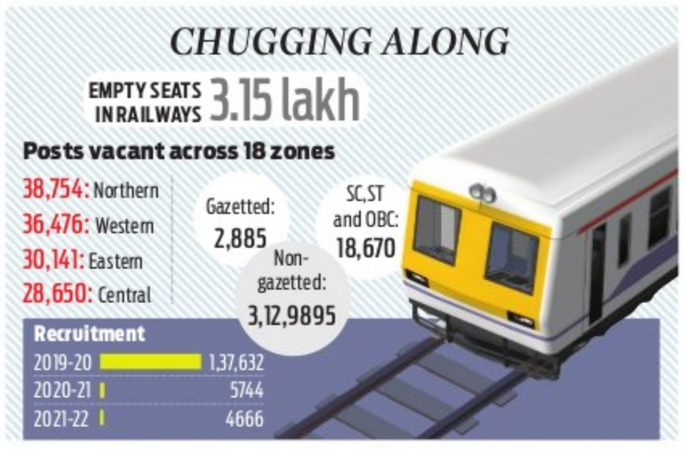
Over 3.5 lakh posts lying vacant in Railways

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

AMID all the efforts being made by the Central government for job creation ahead of general elections in 2024, the country's national transporter - the Indian Railways continues to function with the highest number of posts lying vacant. More than 3.15 lakh gazetted and non-gazetted posts across 18 zones as on this year's March 31 are lying vacant in the Indian Railways.

As per the data of railway ministry, as on February 1, the total number of vacant posts increased by 21,837 bringing the total tally to 3,15,780 this year in gazetted and non-gazetted categories.

Non-gazetted posts include a range of employment categories, from engineers and technicians to clerks, station masters and ticket collectors.



According to the official data, available with this newspaper, as on date, 2,885 gazetted posts are vacant under 18 zones in addition to 3,12,9895 non-gazetted vacant posts. Similarly, total backlog vacancies of 18,670 exist in Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and OBC categories. As on January 1 this year, the backlog vacancies of 6,112 in SC, 5113 in ST and 7427 in OBC categories existing in the railways. Sources added that the highest number of 38,754 vacancies is in Northern Railways, followed by 36,476 in Western Railways, 30,141 Eastern Railways, and 28,650 in Central Railways and rest in other zones.

A senior railway official said that vacancies continue to go and down in the railway with retirements of employees taking place every year.

"As a data shows, 1,41,886 railway employees from various categories retried in the last three years also. Year-wise speaking, 50,051 employees retired in 2019-20, 46,988 in 2020-21 and 44,847 in 2021-22. The railway is working to fill up the vacant posts continuously, " said an official source. A total of 1,03,769 vacancies have been notified for recruitment in Pay Level 1(erstwhile Group-D) in addition to 330 indent places on UPSC for direct recruitment in Group A in Indian Railways in 2022 and 2023.

FABRICATED RECORDS

An offence has been registered against a builder and a land owner for allegedly fabricating records and permits and constructing a building in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said on Saturday.

30 BOOKED FOR CREATING RUCKUS NEAR TEMPLE IN THANE

INDIA	Max	Min		Max	Min
Ahmedabad	34	21	Mumbai	31	23
Bhopal	34	18	Panaji	30	22
Jaipur	30	17	Patna	34	20
Amritsar	26	13	Lucknow	32	18
Chennai	32	28	Port Blair	33	24
Kolkata	33	24	Imphal	28	14
Srinagar	16	04	Chandigarh	27	13

No differences with other Oppn parties, says Pawar

NCP chief, however, says party's stand on Savarkar, Adani different

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

REITERATING his stand on Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe on the Adani issue, NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday said JPC probe will not be fair and impartial as majority of members will be from the ruling party and therefore the Oppositions should focus on Supreme Court-monitored committee.

He said NCP stand is different from the other Opposition parties on VD Savarkar and JPC demand on Adani, but they are with the Opposition when the fight comes against the BJP.

"We are very much part of the Opposition. We do have differences of opinion over certain issues and that has to be there in democracy. It is true that NCP was also part of the Opposition to demand the JPC on Adani and it also participated in a protest in Delhi demanding the JPC. But now I feel that more than the JPC, the Supreme Court-monitored committee will probe Adani in a fair, time bound and impartial way," Pawar said.

He said out of total 21 JPC members, the BJP will have a majority with 15 members, while the Opposition will get mere six representatives. At present, 16-18 parties are demanding the JPC probe, but all of them are unlikely to get representation on the JPC due their less numbers of Lok Sabha members.

"I was also a member and head of several JPCs earlier and know the end result and its fallout. The JPC result will not be fairly accepted by the Opposition.

We should trust and believe more in the Supreme Court than any foreign agency like Hindenburg," said the former agriculture minister.

The Congress party on the other hand continues to be firm on the demand for the JPC probe. Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said that irrespective of NCP President Sharad Pawar's opinion, there must be a JPC inquiry to find out the truth about the Adani scam.

A probe by the JPC is necessary for the facts of the Adani scam to come out, he said. Patole said the money from LIC, State Bank of India, EPFO was illegally invested by the Modi government in the Adani group.

"Hindenburg report exposes malpractices in Adani group and puts forward the question of whether the public money is safe? Why is Prime Minister Modi not talking about the Adani scam when it is such a big and serious issue? What is the reason to panic if there is nothing wrong?" asked Patole.

Bajrang Dal man, 7 others surrender before Bihar cops

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

A functionary of Bajrang Dal was among eight people who surrendered before the police on Saturday in cases related to communal violence in Biharsharif in Nalanda district during the Ramnavami procession on March 30.

Kundan Kumar, district convenor of Bajrang Dal in Nalanda district, surrendered hours before police initiated process of attachment of property at his house on Saturday morning. He was subsequently quizzed by the senior police officials.

RAM NAVAMI CLASHES

Kundan, however, told media persons that he had been booked as he was the organiser of the Ramnavami procession. "I had already submitted a petition seeking permission from local district authority," he claimed. He blamed police for disturbances during procession. "Had they made adequate security arrangements, incident would have been averted." Nalanda superintendent of police Ashok Mishra said that eight out of nine named have surrendered and raids were on to arrest the remaining one.

Cow slaughtered by UP saffron outfit to stoke violence: Cops

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

IN a big revelation, the Agra Police, on Saturday, claimed that a few members of Bharat Hindu Mahasabha (BHM) slaughtered a cow to incite communal violence in the city of Taj during Ram Navami celebration on March 30.

Agra Police had even arrested two youths after a raid during Ram Navami celebrations from Etmaduddaula area of Gautam Nagar in Agra. Search was on for others involved in the conspiracy.

According to the police sources, the name of Sanjay Jat, Hindu Mahasabha's national spokesperson, had come up as the main conspirator. He hatched a conspiracy with some BHM workers and persons from minority community to frame his rivals who were later named in the FIR lodged by Jitendra Kushwaha, also of BHM.

As per the senior police officials, Sanjay Jat along with his followers and friends slaughtered a cow in the Mehtab Bagh area on the night of March 29 and told party member Jitendra Kushwaha to file a case against Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Nakim and Mohammad Shanu.

After the investigation, police claimed it to be a sordid tale of mutual rivalry. An inquiry suggests that Sanjay had an enmity with some people named in the FIR and wanted to implicate them in the case, said the police sources.

Kushwaha even gheraoed the police station twice seeking arrest of the persons named in the FIR.

'BHM spokesperson named key conspirator'

As per police sources, the name of Sanjay Jat, Hindu Mahasabha's national spokesperson, had come up as the main conspirator. He hatched a conspiracy with some BHM workers and persons from minority community to frame his rivals who were later named in the FIR.

GUWAHATI DIARY

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR

Our correspondent in Guwahati

prasantamazumdar@newindianexpress.com

FIR against BJP min for remarks on Taj Mahal

An FIR has been lodged against an MLA of ruling BJP in Assam for his remarks that Taj Mahal and Qutub Minar should be demolished. "The Taj Mahal and Qutub Minar should be demolished and the world's most beautiful temples should be built there," the Mariani MLA insisted. He promised to contribute his one year's salaries for the purpose. Advocate Taijuddin Ahmed lodged an FIR against Kurmi with the Latasil police station in Guwahati. He condemned the MLA's remarks, "The Taj Mahal is not a religious site of the Muslims but an asset of India. So, his statement is not only anti-national but also communal.

Panic sets in as tigers venture out in open

Some adult Royal Bengal Tigers have caused panic among tea garden workers of Kaliabor in Assam's Nagaon district, prompting the authorities to clamp Section 144 in the areas. Over the past two months, the big cats have often strayed out of a forested area and moved around tea gardens in search of food. They attacked and killed livestock, including cattle. Three days ago, panic set in among the tea garden workers after they had spotted a tiger from a close range. A road leads to a temple in the vicinity and the forest guards have restricted the movement of people.

River partly covered ahead of IPL match

Ahead of the first-ever IPL match in Guwahati, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) had covered the "Mora Bharalu" river with tarpaulin, which has received a lot of criticism. Social media users as well as opposition parties slammed the GMC for attempting to hide the dirty river, which is a tributary of the Brahmaputra, from visitors. The river flows beside the Barsapara Stadium where the cricket match between Rajasthan Royals and Punjab Kings was played. In the face of the criticism, the GMC said the river was covered to keep the 'mosquito menace at bay.

Dalit woman raped, burnt alive in Raj's Barmer district

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

A 30-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly raped and burnt alive in Rajasthan's Barmer district on Thursday. The woman, who has two children, suffered about 50% burn injuries. She was first admitted to a government hospital in Barmer and later referred to a higher medical institution in Jodhpur where she finally succumbed to her burns on Saturday.

Police officials said the accused Shakur Khan belonged to the same village as the woman. He was absconding initially, however, he has now been arrested. The incident took place on Thursday, when the woman was alone and the accused broke into the house and raped her. He set her on fire and fled from the spot after her neighbours started gathering upon hearing her screams.

The woman died during treatment at a government hospital in Jodhpur. Meanwhile, the relatives of the woman have alleged that police initially delayed registering the case, leading to protests by Dalit groups outside the police station. The BJP unit in Balotra also held a protest on Saturday.

Power paucity prompts Punjab to tweak work timings in govt offices

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

IN a bid to save electricity, the Punjab government announced that from May 2, all its offices will function from 7.30 am to 2 pm. Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said on Saturday that the decision had been taken in larger public interest.

He said that the revised timings will come into effect from May 2 and remain in force till July 15.

He said that the decision would benefit the common people as they would be able to get their work done easily in government offices during the scorching heat in the ensuing summer season.

Mann said that the decision has been taken after due consultation with all the stakeholders.

Elaborating, Mann said that it will enable the common man to get his work done early morning without taking leave from work. Likewise, he said, it will also facilitate the employees as they will be able to attend social functions after the office hours and spend more time with their children who will also come home at the same time.

Mann said that this decision will be applicable to all the offices of Punjab government.

He said the move will also help in saving around 300-350 MW power as considerable power was being consumed in government offices. He said that as per the data of PSPCL, the peak load of electricity starts after 1 pm in the day.

Mann said that the new time table will also ensure that maximum sunlight is utilised by the masses.

He said that in several foreign countries, people adjust their watches as per seasons so that they can use the maximum sunlight

EMPOWERMENT

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan discusses benefits of Ladli Bahna Yojana with women in Ratlam district on Saturday| EXPRESS

Tej Pratap's luggage moved out of hotel

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

BIHAR Cabinet Minister Tej Pratap Yadav had to leave a hotel in Varanasi after his belongings were shunted from his room to the reception, said police sources here on Saturday.

As per sources, the staff at Arcadia Hotel in Sigra locality of Varanasi, where Yadav was staying, allegedly entered his room and took out his belongings from there. They kept them at the reception.

Reportedly, the minister was not in his room when his luggage was shifted by the hotel staff. After he came to know about the incident, Yadav's personal assistant filed a written complaint with the local police station demanding strict action against the hotel management.

Taking cognizance of the incident, the local police arrived at the hotel and started investigating the matter. After scanning the CCTV footage of the hotel, the cops questioned the hotel staff who was seen in a video that has gone viral on social media.

In the video, Yadav was seen sitting inside a white car. After a while, the car left the hotel premises. However, as per the complaint lodged by Yadav's personal secretary, the Bihar minister was staying in room number 205 and had booked room number 206 for his staff and security personnel.

The luggage of the minister and his staff was shifted from both the rooms to the reception.

As Yadav returned from a day of darshan, boat riding and Ganga Aarti to find his luggage at the reception, he was told by the hotel management that he was occupying both the rooms without a booking.

The hotel sources said that the rooms under minister's occupation were booked under the name of some other persons.

As per Sigra police station incharge Raju Singh, probe into the case is on.

Bihar: Prohibition law's domino effect results in overcrowding of jails

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

CONCERNED with overcrowding of jails, particularly after the enforcement of prohibition law, Bihar prison directorate has sent a proposal to the state for constructing 13 new jails in the state. Against the present capacity of 47,750, 62,108 prisoners, including 2,730 women, are lodged in 59 jails.

The Nitish government has reportedly taken a decision to construct a Mandal-level jail in Madhepura and 12 sub-divisional jails. New jails are proposed to be constructed in Kahalgaon, Nirmali, Narkatiaganj, Rajgir, Madora, Rajauli, Siwan, Gopalganj, Chakia, Pakridayal, Mahnar and Simri Bakhtiyarpur.

The capacity of jails in Bhabhua, Jamui, Aurangabad, Arwal and Paliganj are being increased. Source said 33 additional prisoner cells in 15 prisons will be constructed. A large number of people, who are lodged in jails, are from the poor section of the society and are not in a position to hire an advocate who can argue their case in courts. Many of them are languishing in jails.

The Bihar government had enforced total prohibition on April 5, 2016 and subsequently a major drive was launched against liquor smugglers, bootleggers and boozers to check the consumption of liquor. The police have arrested a large number of violators of the law as sale and consumption of liquor continued in the state. There have also been instances of hooch tragedies, claiming lives of hundreds of people.

The prohibition law has also been relaxed for the first time offenders as the Authorities, instead of putting them behind bars, will slap a penalty on them. The law has also been criticised for its alleged draconian provisions even as former CM and HAM supremo Jitan Ram Manjhi has asked the state government to amend the law.

Pressing need for more prisons

59 Total Jails | 47,750 Total capacity

3,61,077 Number of cases lodged in Bihar since April 2016 for violation of the liquor prohibition law

1.86 cr. litres Quantity of foreign-made and country liquor seized In 2016 alone

Total prisoners 62,108 (including 2,730 women prisoners) monitoring.

53,139 Number of cases registered related to prohibition

5,17,419 people arrested for violating prohibition law

Guj fails to enforce manual scavenging rules

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

THE Gujarat government has failed to enforce its own rules on sanitation workers and septic tank cleaning.

The rule says a class II officer of the corporation will be held liable if a sanitation worker dies while cleaning the underground drains or septic tank.

But no government official has been charged was charged with a crime despite numerous cases, according to a sanitation worker rights activist.

A circular issued by the Gujarat Government's Urban Development and Housing on May 10, 2019 and the Panchayat and Village Development Department on July 11, 2019 stated: "If any sanitation worker dies while cleaning the underground drains, septic tank, so make a class II officer of the corporation an accused."

However, no government official was charged with a crime despite 95 sanitation employees died and 45 incidences happened in Gujarat, said Purshotham Vaghela, the sanitation worker rights activist.

In the past 15 days, three different instances in Gujarat resulted in the deaths of seven sanitation employees.

Despite a court ruling against it, in some parts of Gujarat excrement is still manually cleaned from private and public dry toilets and open drains.

Three workers died in Bharuch while cleaning the drains, two in Umargam, Valsad, while entering to clean the sewer, and two in Rajkot while cleaning underground drains due to a gas leak.

Even after the Gujarat government's notification, no government official was named in any of the three cases.

Purshotham Vaghela, who has been working for the rehabilitation and rights of manual scavengers for more than 30 years, said: "The Urban Development and Urban Housing Department Secretariat, Gandhinagar, issued a notification on 28 April 2021 to establish Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSU) in the state to prevent manual scavenging in cities and rural areas with a population of more than one lakh."

Vaghela, also founder of the Ahmedabad-based NGO, Manav Garima Trust, added that the above decision was made in response to a Government of India order to establish a Response Sanitation Unit, but none of the local bodies is aware of this Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU), and no awareness has been conducted by the state government in this regard.

"Ny order of the Government of India, a helpline number 14420 has been established in Gujarat to stop manual scavenging; however, when you call this number, you are given the general number of the corporation to complain there, and the number provided of the corporation accepts complaints for water and sewerage problems, not to stop manual scavenging, and a helpline has been established, but no staff has been appointed," he said.

Over the past three decades, Gujarat has had the second-highest incidence of cleaning worker fatalities in the nation.

A national government survey found that 13,460 people in the nation were employed in drain and septic tank cleaning in 2018, and that number increased to 58,098 people in 2019. There are 105 labor families working as manual scavengers in Gujarat. Hiren Banker, a spokesperson for the Congress, said "The mortality toll from manual scavenging of drains and septic tanks in the state of Gujarat has progressively climbed to 136 in the last three decades due to poverty and a lack of alternative employment possibilities."

7 sanitation employees died in the last 15 days

In the past 15 days, three different instances in Gujarat resulted in the deaths of seven sanitation employees. Despite a court ruling against it, in some parts of Gujarat excrement is still manually cleaned from private and public dry toilets and open drains. Three workers died in Bharuch while, two in Umargam, Valsad, and two in Rajkot while cleaning underground drains due to a gas leak.

GLOBAL WEATHER
LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • SW: Snow • TDS: Thundershower • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

Beijing	26	11	TDS	Los Angeles	25	13	LC
Colombo	30	26	LC	Melbourne	14	11	HR
Dhaka	38	26	TDS	Moscow	13	4	HR
Dubai	30	19	SNY	New York	13	6	LC
Houston	24	16	SNY	Singapore	31	26	TDS
Istanbul	14	8	LC	Toronto	8	2	LC
London	17	10	LC	Washington	17	4	LC

ANGRY CHINA STARTS MAJOR MILITARY DRILLS TO INTIMIDATE DEFIANT TAIWAN

In this image taken from video footage run on Saturday by China's *CCTV*, a Chinese fighter jet performs an mid-air refuelling manoeuvre at an unspecified location | AP

BEIJING

CHINA sent warships and dozens of fighter jets toward Taiwan on Saturday, the Taiwanese government said, in retaliation for a meeting between the US House of Representatives speaker and the president of the self-ruled island democracy claimed by Beijing as part of its territory.

The Chinese military announced the start of three-day "combat readiness patrols" as a warning to the Taiwanese who want to make the island's de facto independence permanent. China's People's Liberation Army gave no indication whether they might include a repeat of previous exercises with missiles fired into the sea, which disrupted shipping and airline flights.

On Saturday, eight warships and 71 planes were detected near Taiwan, 45 of which flew across the middle line of the strait that separates it from the mainland, the island's Ministry of Defence said. It said they included Chengdu J-10, Shenyang J-11 and Shenyang J-16 jet fighters.

Also on Saturday, the navy planned to hold "live fire training" in Luoyuan Bay in Fujian province opposite Taiwan, the local Maritime Authority announced. Ships were banned during the firing, which also was due to take place on five dates over the next two weeks.

"This is a serious warning against the collusion and provocation between the 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces and external forces," said a PLA statement. The "Joint Sword" exercises "defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

Plans also called for the exercise to include a destroyer, missile boats, ballistic missiles and land-based anti-ship missiles and early warning, electronic warfare and tanker aircraft, as per *The Global Times*. The Taiwanese military said in a statement missile defence systems were activated and air and sea patrols sent to track the Chinese aircraft.

"We condemn such an irrational act that has jeopardised regional security and stability," a Ministry of Defence statement said on Saturday.

"We will never leave room for 'Taiwan independence' separatist activities in any form and will definitely take resolute measures to defeat any foreign interference," said a spokesperson for Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office, Zhu Fenglian. *AP*

The Taiwan Strait—a history of crises

Ever since Communist China and Taiwan broke away from each other at the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949, the waterway separating them has been a geopolitical flashpoint. Here is a history of crises

FIRST TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS

Mao Zedong's communist forces successfully pushed out Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, who relocated to Taiwan, at the end of the Chinese Civil War

The two rivals—the People's Republic of China (PRC) on the mainland and the Republic of China (ROC) in Taiwan—stood on either side of the strait

The First Taiwan Strait Crisis broke out in August 1954 when the Nationalists placed thousands of troops on Taiwan-ruled Kinmen and Matsu

The crisis was eventually defused but brought China and the US to the brink of direct conflict

SECOND TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS

Fighting broke out again in 1958 as Mao's forces conducted an intense bombardment of Kinmen and Matsu in another bid to dislodge Nationalist troops

Concerned that the loss of the islands might lead to the Beijing's takeover of Taiwan, United States President Dwight D Eisenhower ordered his army to escort and resupply their Taiwanese allies

Unable to take the offshore islands or bombard the Nationalists into submission, Beijing announced a ceasefire

THIRD TAIWAN STRAIT CRISIS

Tensions exploded again in 1995 when China began test-firing missiles in the waters around Taiwan to protest against a visit by Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to his alma mater university in the United States

Beijing loathed Lee because he favoured Taiwan declaring itself an independent state

Further missile tests were carried out a year later as Taiwan held its first direct presidential election

The display backfired. The US sent two aircraft carrier groups to push China into backing down and Lee won the election by a large margin

North Korea claims it tested another underwater N-drone

SEOUL

NORTH Korea claimed on Saturday it had tested another underwater nuclear attack drone, in its latest response to South Korean and US military drills, though analysts have questioned whether Pyongyang has such a weapon.

In recent weeks, North Korea has tested what state media have described as an underwater nuclear-capable drone, and also carried out the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).

"A national defence science research institute in the DPRK carried out a test of underwater strategic weapon system from April 4 to 7," the official *KCNA* said. "The underwater nuclear attack drone 'Haeil-2'... cruised 1,000 km of simulated underwater distance ... for 71 hours and 6 minutes."

Haeil is a Korean word which means tsunamis or tidal waves. *KCNA* added that "the test warhead accurately detonated underwater. The test perfectly proved the reliability of the underwater strategic weapon system and its fatal attack ability."

North Korea has claimed to have conducted three tests of underwater drones in less than three weeks so far. On March 23, it claimed to have conducted the first test of the Haeil, which means tsunami in Korean, able to unleash a "radioactive tsunami" as it blamed US-South Korea exercises for a deteriorating regional security situation. Five days later, it said it had carried out a second test.

In response, South Korean Defence Minister Lee Jong-sup told MPs Seoul was "capable of monitoring and detecting such drones infiltrating underwater." Satellite imagery has also indicated a high level of activity at North Korea's main nuclear complex.

The report of the test came a day after the nuclear envoys of the US, South Korea and Japan met in Seoul to discuss the growing North Korean nuclear threat and called for stronger international efforts to crack down on illicit North Korean activities funding its weapons programme. *Agencies*

60 more Iranian girl students poisoned; 5K affected so far

TEHRAN

DOZENS of schoolgirls were poisoned on Saturday in several schools across Iran, local media reported, in continuation of the mysterious phenomenon that has shaken the country for months. Since late November, many schools, mostly for girls, have been affected by sudden poisoning incidents from gases or toxic substances, in some cases causing fainting and hospitalisation among the students.

At least "60 students were poisoned in a girls' school in the town of Haftkel" in the oil-rich south-western province of Khuzestan, state television's *IRIB* news agency cited a local official as saying.

A number of schoolgirls were poisoned in "five schools in Ardabil in the northwest," where the victims showed symptoms of "anxiety, shortness of breath and headaches," a provincial medical official said. In the northwestern town of Urmia, capital of West Azerbaijan province, "a number of schoolgirls were taken to hospital on Saturday after feeling sick", *ILNA* news agency reported without any further elaboration on the incident.

According to an official count provided on March 7, "more than 5,000 students" have been affected by similar poisonings in more than 230 establishments, located in 25 of the country's 31 provinces.

On Friday, MP Hamidreza Kazemi, the head of the national fact-finding committee formed to investigate these cases, specified that "the final report" would be published "in two weeks."

"We have received reports from various bodies and we are studying the issue in order to present our conclusion to parliament," he said.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had called on March 6 for "severe sentences" up to the death penalty against those found responsible for the poisonings. The poisoning cases began two months after the start of a protest movement in Iran sparked by the September 16 death in custody of Mahsa Amini. *AFP*

US sends guided-missile submarine to West Asia

dubai: The US Navy has deployed a guided-missile submarine capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk missiles to the Middle East, a spokesman said on Saturday, in what appeared to be a show of force toward Iran following recent tensions. The Navy rarely acknowledges the location or deployment of submarines. Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins, a spokesman for the 5th Fleet based in the Gulf nation of Bahrain, declined to comment on the submarine's mission or what had prompted the deployment. He said the nuclear-powered submarine, based out of Kings Bay, Georgia, passed through the Suez Canal on Friday. "It is capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles and is deployed to US 5th Fleet to help ensure regional maritime security and stability," Hawkins said. The 5th Fleet patrols the crucial Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of all oil transits. Its region includes Bab el-Mandeb Strait off Yemen and Red Sea stretching up to the Suez Canal, the Egyptian waterway linking the Mideast to the Mediterranean Sea. Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from ships or submarines can hit targets up to 2,500 kilometres. They were famously employed during the opening hours of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq and in response to a Syrian chemical weapons attack in 2018. AP

IN THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA AT BENGALURU
(original jurisdiction)
PROBATE C.P No. 18/ 2022
In the matter of the Estate of Late Sameer S Arabatti

BETWEEN : 1. Ms KEERTHI S ARABATTI, Aged about 39 years, wife of Late Sameer S Arabatti, R/at No D-701, Ajmera Green Acres, Kalena Agrahara, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore-560076. ...1st PETITIONER
2. Ms PRISHA S ARABATTI, Aged about 12 years, D/o Late Sameer S Arabatti, R/at No D-701, Ajmera Green Acres, Kalena Agrahara, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore-560076. Being Minor, represented in these proceedings by her mother and natural guardian Ms. Keerthi Arabatti, the 1st Petitioner herein
...2nd PETITIONER
AND : NIL ....RESPONDENT

Whereas, **Keerthi S Arabatti and Prisha S Arabatti,** the Petitioners above named have filed a petition for the grant of Letters of Administration under Part IX Chapter I:Section 218 Of Indian Succession Act, 1925 R/W Part IX Chapter I Section 278 And 300 Of Indian Succession Act, 1925 for the securities and movable assets owned by the deceased Late. Sameer S Arabatti.

Be it known that no caveat has been entered by anyone and that the said petition is posted for hearing on the **23-05-2023,** and all persons claiming to have an interest in the estate of the deceased may come and see the proceedings before the grant of the Letters of Administration.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court **13-03-2023 and 21-03-2023**

By Order of the Hon'ble Court,
Assistant Registrar
High Court of Karnataka, Bangalore.

Advocate for Petitioners,
S. Sushant Venkatesh Pai,
No. 253, 1st Floor, 36th Cross, 6th Main, 4n Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru-560011

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given to the public that we are investigating the right, title, interest, benefits, entitlements of whatsoever nature of the owners of the schedule property, as mentioned hereinbelow, all are situated at 13/14th Cross Road, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore City Corporation Division No.37 of Bangalore, which is more particularly described in the Schedule hereunder written and hereinafter called **"Schedule Property"**. situated at 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore.

ALL persons including an individual, a Hindu Undivided Family, a company, banks, financial institution(s), non- banking financial institution(s), a firm, an association of persons or a body of individuals whether incorporated or not, lenders and/or creditors having any objection, claim, right, title and/or interest in respect of Schedule Property or any part or portion thereof by way of sale, memorandum of understanding, exchange, mortgage, pledge, charge, gift, trust, inheritance, succession, possession, lease, tenancy, maintenance easement, license, bequeath, share, assignment, lien, attachment, development rights, right of way, lis pendens, reservation, development rights, or any liability or commitment or otherwise or demand of any nature whatsoever are hereby requested to inform the same in writing, supported with the original documents, to the undersigned having their office at Trust Law, having its office at Trust Law, No.29/11, 1st Floor, Udhaya Sahakara Bhavan, Mount Joy Road, 1st Main Road, Bangalore 560 019, within a period of **07 (Seven) days** from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Item No. 01 :
BDA **Site No 326,** situated at 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore City Corporation Division No.37 of Bangalore, Present BMP No.10, situated at 14th Cross, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore Mahanagar palike ward No 56 of Bangalore measuring East to west 80 feet and North to South 120 feet in all measuring **9600 Square feet** with all easementary rights, appurtenances advantages either latent or patent to the schedule property and bounded on the
East by : Property No.327;
West by : Property No.325:
North by : Property No.322 and 323;
South by : 14th Cross Road.

Item No. 02 :
BDA **Site Nos.322 and 323** (New No.23 and 24) Old PID No.50-64-23/24-1, situated at 13/14th Cross Road, 2nd Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore, present BBMP New No.23/24-1, PID No.50-64-23/24-1, situated at 13th Cross, 2nd Block Jayanagar, BBMP Ward No.50, V.V.Puram, Bangalore measuring East to West 81 feet and North to South 32-4 feet in all measuring **2618.99 Square feet,** with a car shed on the South west corner with built up area 270 Square feet together with all easementary rights, appurtenances, advantages, whatsoever whether underneath or and Surface the property and bounded on the :
East by : Site No.321.
West by : Site No.324.
North by : Portion of the property allotted to Pushpa Girimaji and Jyothi Towari.
South by : Site old No.326 old No.326/10.

Narayana Babu
Partner, Trust Law,
No.29/11, 1st Floor, Udhaya Sahakara Bhavan, Mount Joy Road, 1st Main Road, Bangalore 560 019.
Dated : 08/04/2023 Bangalore

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the original Gift Deed dated 04.03.2020 executed by Mr Y R Ravikumar in favor of Mr. Y R Rajashekar registered in Book I as Document No. YAN-1-11516-2019-20 stored in CD No. YAND985, in the Office of the Senior Sub Registrar Yelahanka, Bangalore with respect to **non-residential site No.43/B, bearing BBMP khata No 536/1/43/B1, measuring east to west an extent of (21.00 + 20.90)/2 metres and north to south 20 metres, admeasuring 419 square metres or 4510 square feet** out of east to west an extent of (20.30 + 21.00)/2 metres and north to south (40.30 + 40.00)/2 metres, admeasuring 829.09 square metres or 8921 square feet, bearing BBMP khata No 536/43/b, **situated in B Sector, Ward No 4, Yelahanka Upanagara, Bangalore North Taluk** is not traceable. The current registered owner of the Schedule Property is Mr. Y R Rajashekar (**"Owner"**). The Owner has lodged a complaint with the jurisdictional Police regarding the loss of the title deed.

Anybody transacting in respect of the Schedule Property with any person other than Owner shall be doing so at their own risk and the Owner shall not be responsible for the same in any manner. Any person/s in possession of the aforesaid documents shall kindly deliver the same at the address given below.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of **non-residential site No.43/B, bearing BBMP khata No 536/1/43/B1, measuring east to west an extent of (21.00 + 20.90)/2 metres and north to south 20 metres, admeasuring 419 square metres or 4510 square feet** out of east to west an extent of (20.30 + 21.00)/2 metres and north to south (40.30 + 40.00)/2 metres, admeasuring 829.09 square metres or 8921 square feet, bearing BBMP khata No 536/43/b, **situated in B Sector, Ward No 4, Yelahanka Upanagara, Bangalore North Taluk** and bound as follows:**East:**Road, **West:**House No 42/D & Site No.42/E, **North:** Remaining portion of Site No 43/B, **South** :Road.

Bindiya Kulkarni, Advocate
No.206A, II Floor, Embassy Square, No 148, Infantry Road, Bangalore 560001

PUBLIC NOTICE

My clients **(1) Smt. T. ANURANJANI,** aged about 42 years, W/o. Varaha Venkata Rajesh Paila, **(2) Sri. VARAHA VENKATA RAJESH PAILA,** aged about 43 years, S/o. Seeti Naidu Paila, Both are R/at. # Flat No. 308, Srishti Pradhan, Kaverappa Layout, Opp. Vidya Vikas School, Panathur, Bangalore 560103, are intending to purchase the Schedule properties from its owner **Mr. Subramani.G.N,** aged about 48 years, S/o. Late. Narayanappa, R/at. # 73, "Sri. Narasimhadri Nilaya, Muneshwaraswamy Temple Road, Guduru Village, Bidarahalli Hobli Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore 560049, for Valuable Consideration. Any persons having any rights/claims/objections/Minor Claims, in respect of the schedule property are hereby requested to send their objections to the above mentioned address within 7 days, from the receipt of the this public notice. If no objections are forth coming within 7 days, my clients shall get executed sale deed in their favour.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

Item No.1: All that piece and parcel of immovable property bearing Vacant Site No. 12, Khata No. 63/2/12, formed in Residential Converted Land in Sy. No. 63/2, bearing Conversion certificate No. ALN (EBB) SR75/2019-20 Dated 14/02/2022, issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore, Panchayath Raj Khata (RDPR) Khata for the composite Property assessment No. 63/2, PID No. 150200401600820801, issued by the Mandur Village Panchayath, Situated at. Mandure Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore, measuring East to West: 40 feet and North to South: 20 feet, in all measuring 800 Square feet bounded on the:
East by : 25 feet Road,
West by : Private Property,
North by : 25 feet Road,
South by : Site No. 13,

Item No.2: All that piece and parcel of immovable property bearing Vacant Site No. 13, Khata No. 63/2/13, formed in Residential Converted Land in Sy. No. 63/2, bearing Conversion certificate No. ALN (EBB) SR75/2019-20 Dated 14/02/2022, issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore District, Bangalore, Panchayath Raj Khata (RDPR) Khata for the composite Property assessment No. 63/2, PID No. 150200401600820801, issued by the Mandur Village Panchayath, Situated at. Mandure Village, Bidarahalli Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore, measuring East to West: 40 feet and North to South: 30 feet, in all measuring 1200 Square feet bounded on the:
East by : 25 feet Road,
West by : Private Property,
North by : Site No.12,
South by : Site No. 14,

From **Mr. Manjunath Reddy,** B.A., LLB., **Smt. T. Shobha Reddy,** B.Sc., LLB., No. 8/7, Mega City BEML Layout Road, Maragondanahalli Main Road, K.R. Puram Post, Bangalore-36. Ph:- 9845520830, 7353233778, 9886644778

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to bring the notice of the General Public that my client, Mrs. SAPPANI NANDHINI aged about 28 years W/o Mr. Shanmugam Sappani, Residing at No. Flat No.402, Sri Lavanya Serenity, 6th Main, 13th 'D' Cross, Venkatapura Main Road, Koramangala, 1st Block, Bangalore-560034, do hereby declare that she has lost her original sale deed dated 23.03.2018, registered on 24.03.2018, bearing document No.ABL-1-07402-2017-18, of Book-I, stored in CD No. ABLD315, on the file of the sub registrar, Anekal, Bangalore, in respect of the Residential Flat bearing No.004, in Ground Floor, measuring about 1345 Sq. feet super built up area, containing Three bedrooms together with RCC Roofing, Vitrified flooring, together with one covered car parking space, including proportionate share in common areas such as passages, lobbies, staircase, etc., in the multistoried residential building known as "SRI VANDANA MEADOWS" constructed over Schedule "A" Property, along with 372.79 Sq. feet undivided share, in the Property bearing Converted Sy.No.25/2, (converted for residential purpose vide Conversion Order No.ALN(A)(S)SR105 /2011-12, dated 26/11/2011, issued by the Special Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore Dist., Bangalore) situated at Kudlu Village, Sarjapura Hobli, Anekal Taluk Bangalore District.,

Between 28.03.20223 around 8 a.m to 29.03.2023 around 9 a.m, near HSR Layout BDA Complex, the document was missing or misplaced, the above said original sale deed. With her best efforts she could not able to trace the same, in this regard she has lodged a police missing Lost report No: 0518529/2023 dated 30.03.2023, since not traced, if any one find the above said original document, may kindly be handover the same to the undersigned or to the nearby police station, in case anybody misuse the said document, my client is not responsible for the same., Any person/s having objection/s or claims, with respect to the schedule property, may with documentary evidence, lodge their objections/claims within seven days from the date of this notice with the undersigned, where after no further claims will be entertained and or the same will be deemed to have been waived or abandoned.

Sri.H.R.Jayashekara Reddy, Advocate No.348, 6th Main, 15 'A' Cross, 6th Sector, H.S.R.Layout, Bangalore – 560 102. Mob. 9880715022.

QuoteExpress
PROBLEMS ARE NOT STOP SIGNS, THEY ARE GUIDELINES
ROBERT H SCHULLER

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
ELECTRICAL (TRD) BRANCH, TIRUCHCHIRAPPALLI DIVISION
TENDER NOTICE

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager, Traction Distribution, Southern Railway, Tiruchchirappalli - 620001 invites online E-tenders from prospective tenderers / bidders for the following work.

1. Tender Number	: PJ-TRD-2023-2024-01
2. Name of work	: TPJ Div. - Provision of CT's & PT's for ABT meter in HT side at Railway Traction Sub-stations for TEMS
3. Approx, value of tender	: Rs. 1,19,15,224.06/-
4. Bid Security	: Rs. 2,09,600/-
5. Period of completion	: Twelve Months
1. Tender Number	: TPJ-TRD-2023-2024-02
2. Name of work	: TPJ Div. - Electrification of Ballast Sidings available at MCJ, TJ, PMB, VRI and VM
3. Approx, value offender	: Rs. 1,98,60,894.99/-
4.Bid Security	: Rs. 2,49,300/-
5.Period of completion	: Nine Months
1.Tender Number	: TPJ-TRD-2023-2024-03
2. Name of work	: TPJ Division - Replacement of over aged assets in view of safety and reliability & Securing structure bonds in platforms of various stations by providing cleat arrangements and concealing the bonds in pathway of platforms
3. Approx, value of tender	: Rs. 1,68,80,633.70/-
4. Bid Security	: Rs. 2,34,400/-
5. Period of completion	: Nine Months
1.Tender Number	: TPJ-TRD-2023-2024-04
2. Name of work	: TPJ Division - Thanjavur jn. (NSG3)-Extension of PF no 1 for a length of 24 m and PF 2/3 for a length of 70 m & VM-MV section: Proposed Raising of PFs from Medium level to High level at stations PUC (NSG6) ,ALP (NSG6) and NID (Hg2)- Electrical Traction Arrangements
3. Approx, value of tender	: Rs. 26,11,556.14/-
4. Bid Security	: Rs. 52,300/-
5. Period of completion	: Four Months
a. Cost of tender booklet	: Nil
b. Date & Time of Bidding	: 19.04.2023 to 15:00 Hours on 03.05.2023
c. Date & Time of Tender Opening	: After 15.00 Hours on 03.05.2023
d. Period of validity of offer	: 87 days from the date of tender opening

NOTE: 1. The prospective tenderers/bidders are requested to register themselves with IREPS (Indian Railway Electronic Procurement System), if not done already, for participating in E-Tenders. Registration form is available on IREPS site (Quick link New Vendors/Contractors (E-Tender).
2. Contractors/Bidders are requested to procure Digital Signing Certificate (DSC) Class III or appropriate from Govt. of India, authorized Certifying authority (CCA-Controller of Certifying Authority) for participating in E-Tender & to log into IREPS.
3. Payment of Bid Security in respect of e-tendering, should be done through net banking or payment gateway only (online payment) or in the form of BG as per GCC 2022. Tenders received without Bid Security shall be rejected.
4. Kindly log on to http://www.ireps.gov.in for complete details, terms and conditions of the above tender and details of bid submission and the on line bids are required to be digitally signed. The tenderers are advised to refer to the documents uploaded.
5. All Addendum/Corrigendum, Time extension, clarifications, etc. will be uploaded on or before 19.04.2023, in the website only and will not be published separately in Newspapers. Bidders should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.
6. Tenderers need not be present in the office for tender opening as they can watch the status of opened tenders, on line through IREPS.

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यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Union Bank of India

REGIONAL OFFICE BROADWAY CHENNAI

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

Union Bank Bhavan 2nd Floor, 139, Prakasam Salai, Broadway, Chennai -600108. Ph: +91 9633457999 Mail: cmcrldrochennai@unionbankofindia.bank

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged / charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/ physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Union Bank of India (secured creditor), will be sold on **"As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is"** on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). **The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also mentioned hereunder:**

PORT BLAIR BRANCH : Name of the Borrower & Guarantor/s: 1.Manoj Trading Corporation, 18 HKSP Building Gurudwara Lane, Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. **2.Shri Shashank Puria,** 18 HKSP Building Gurudwara Lane, Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. **3.Smt. Anita Puria,** 18 HKSP Building Gurudwara Lane, Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Amount due: Rs 84,67,059.88 as on 31.12.2022 plus interest and other charges thereon

Description of immovable secured assets to be Sold: Apartment bearing Sy No's 39/1,39/2,47/1 & others BBMP Katha No.1650/39/1, 39/2,47/1, 47/2/A-223 on 2nd floor , A Block Apartment Known as " Gokulam" situated at Vasanthapura Village, Uttarahalli Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, Bangalore owned by Smt Anitha Puria W/o Late Manoj Kumar Puria at 18/19 HSKP building Gurudwara lane Port Blair Andaman and Nicobar island Boundaries: North: By Flat No 222, South: By Flat No 224, West : By passage, East: By internal Driveway.

RESERVE PRICE ₹ 69,70,000/- EMD 10% ₹ 6,97,000/- BID INCREMENT ₹ 50,000/-

Above all properties Encumbrances known to the Secured Creditor : Nil MOBILE 95949 77412

DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION: 26.04.2023 between 11.00 AM to 05.00 PM (with 10 min unlimited auto extensions)

E-auction website www.mstcecommerce.com

Intending bidders may download atfree of cost, copies of sale notice, Terms and Conditions of e.auction Help Manual on operational part of e-auction from e-Bkray – IBAPI portal **(https://www.ibapi.in)** For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in **https://www.mstcecommerce.com.** For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit **https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp**

STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE OF UNDER RULE 8(6)/Rule 9(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002.

This may also be treated as notice u/r Rule 8(6)/Rule 9(1) of security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the borrower/s and guarantor/s of the said loan about the holding of E-auction Sale on the above-mentioned date.

Place: Port Blair
Date: 30.03.2023

Authorised Officer
Union Bank of India

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Union Bank of India आंध्रा Andhra कॉर्पोरेशन Corporation

UNION BANK OF INDIA
EAB Mandapeta Branch, Tarveni peta, Mandapeta.
Ph: 08842361206. Email: ubin0803553@unionbankofindia.bank

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) / Co-obligant(s) / Mortgagor(s) / Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to **erstwhile Andhra bank, now Union Bank of India,** the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of **Mandapeta Branch, erstwhile Andhra bank, now Union Bank of India,** will be sold through e-auction **"As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis on 26.04.2023,** for recovery of **Rs.1,53,44,024.20 (Rupees One Crore Fifty Three Lakhs Forty Four Thousand Twenty Four and Twenty Paise Only) as on 31.12.2022** plus further interest, costs and charges due to the **erstwhile Andhra bank, now Union Bank of India** from:- **{Borrower(s) /Co-obligant(s)/ Mortgagor(s)/ Guarantor(s)}: 1) Mr.Koganti Satyanarayana, S/o. Ramaiah,** 54-14/8-25/6A, Bharathinagar, Road No.7, Opposite Vinayaka Cinema Hall, VJ Polytechnic, Vijayawada-520008 & **Co-obligant(s)/ Guarantor(s)/ Mortgagor(s): 2) Mrs.Koganti Madhavi, W/o.Koganti Satyanarayana,** 54-14/8-25/6A, Bharathinagar, Road No.7, Opposite Vinayaka Cinema Hall, VJ Polytechnic, Vijayawada-520008.

DETAILS OF SECURITIES	Reserve Price, EMD & Bid Increment	Date and Time of e-Auction
Brindavan Apartments with plinth area of 1770 Sq.ft. in Flat No.H-7, 7th floor, Adugodi Village, Beguar Hobli, Hosur Road, Corporation Ward No.63, Bangalore-560030, **bounded by: East:** Open to Sky; **West:** Corridor; **North:** Flat No. H-6; **South:** Open to Sky. **Land bounded by: East:** Hosur Road; **West:** Portion of Survey Nos. 66/1 & 66/2; **North:** Portion of Survey Nos.66/1 & 66/2; **South:** Private Property.	**Reserve Price: Rs.144.00/- Lakhs** (Below which the property would not be sold) **EMD: Rs.14,40,000/- Bid Increment: Rs.10,000/-**	**26.04.2023 11.00 am to 3.00pm**

Last Date of Deposit EMD: On or before the commencement of e-Auction

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit the link provided in **www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/TendelViewAllAuction.aspx** or **https://ibapi.in/Sale_Info_Home.aspx.**

STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) / Rule 9(1) OF STATUTORY INTEREST ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002

This may also be treated as notice u/r 8(6)/Rule 9(1) of security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the borrower/s and guarantor/s of the said loan about the holding of E-auction Sale on the above mentioned date.

Date: 04.04.2023; Place: Rajahmundry **Sd/- Chief Manager & Authorized Officer, Mandapeta Branch, Union Bank of India**

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₹23.2 lakh cr banks and financial institutions have sanctioned to over 40.82 crore beneficiaries under Mudra Yojana since launch of the scheme in 2015

Hiring on amid layoffs by start-ups

Reports suggest over 24K employees have lost jobs in Indian start-ups till now since 2022

UMA KANNAN @ Bengaluru

LAYOFFS and hiring freeze in start-ups and big tech companies are back in limelight amid global slowdown. While big companies have already announced layoffs and are planning further job cuts, start-ups are announcing layoffs either over email or in town hall meetings.

Last week alone three start-ups have fired employees. After an acquisition deal with PhonePe fell through, ZestMoney laid off about 20% or 100 employees and this was announced during a town hall meeting. Healthtech start-up Practo fired 41 employees. Delivery platform Dunzo also fired 300 employees. Start-ups are downsizing to conserve cash amid funding scarcity.

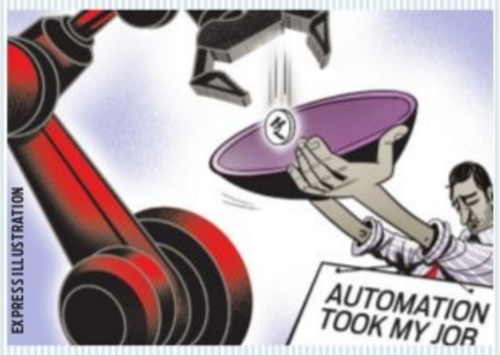
As per various reports, over 24,000 employees have lost jobs in Indian start-ups till now since 2022. Layoffs.fyi, which compiles data from public reports and tracks layoffs, says 566 tech companies globally have fired over 1.68 lakh employees in 2023 alone.

IT companies are going slow on hiring, but will there be any layoffs in Indian IT companies as well? Accenture has already announced 19,000 job cuts globally. "The conditions that triggered the layoffs since last year have been largely unprecedented and unexpected. Any projection of layoffs for the year ahead could hence be tricky and misleading if quantified. However, we have reason to believe that the large waves of layoffs are now in the rear-view mirror," said Kamal Karanth, co-founder, Xpheno, a staffing firm. "Enterprises going through large scale layoffs are also the ones who engaged in overhiring and talent hoarding during the buoyancy of 2021 and early 2022. Layoffs by big players are largely akin to shedding excess flab that is difficult to hold amidst current market trends," he added.

Karanth added that while corrective resizing and workforce optimising as calibrations would continue across sectors, hiring action would also be in play as enterprises need to maintain their real critical mass for efficiency.

LAYOFFS & HIRING

- Layoffs.fyi says **566** tech firms globally have fired over **1.68** lakh employees in **2023** alone
- ZestMoney fires **100** employees after acquisition deal fails
- TeamLease Services' new report says hiring intentions in Q1 Apr-Jun **FY23-24** is 10% higher
- Hiring intent for services is at **91%** and for the manufacturing sector is at **85%**
- For **FY24**, it is estimated that the Indian IT sector will hire **350,000** to **400,000** employees



EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

Entry-level salaries in IT sector range anywhere between `3.5 lakh and `7 lakh

Not all gloomy for job seekers

Though experts say that there would be layoffs in coming months too, they also say that certain sectors are attracting more jobs. Recently, TeamLease Services released its Employment Outlook Report for the Services and Manufacturing sectors for first quarter of 2023-24. The report says despite the ongoing global turmoil, hiring intentions in Q1 FY24 is 10% higher compared to the same period last year. However, compared to Q4 FY23, the hiring outlook has witnessed a 4% dip.

The report projects a strong outlook for entry and junior-level employees, in both Service (73% and 71%, respectively) and manufacturing (49% and 55%, respectively) sectors. Kartik Narayan, CEO – Staffing, TeamLease Services, said, "Industries around the world, including those in India, have been severely affected by the current global unrest resulting in large-scale layoffs and a hiring freeze. Despite this, hiring prospects in India have continued to improve over the past year, with 64% of employers in the service and manufacturing industries expressing a positive outlook on hiring."

Hiring in IT and start-ups

Randstad's recent Startup Hiring Trends Survey in collaboration with FICCI has shown that a significant proportion (80%) of early-stage start-ups with a current workforce of fewer than 20 employees, are actively seeking to expand their workforce in 2023.

"We believe that this momentum will continue in FY24 due to strong prospects of post-pandemic recovery in start-up and allied sectors," said Yeshab Giri, Chief Commercial Officer, Staffing & Randstad Technologies, Randstad India.

"FY2024 has taken off on a slow-foot for hiring action, with Active Talent demand dropping by 10% - 12% over the previous month. As a key talent consuming sector, the IT sector's current active jobs volume is 56% lesser than the same period last year. Hiring by the tech start-ups cohort has been on the low gear since the second half of 2022. The current active talent demand from start-ups remains in the low 15,000-17,000 range, amidst extended funding winter," Karanth said.

On the non-tech front, according to Xpheno, the BFSI sector currently shows its first drop in volume over six months. With a 25% month-on-month drop in active openings, the BFSI sector broke its streak of positive growth figures seen since September 2022. "Other non-tech sectors like Consulting & Professional Services, Education, Media & Advertising, Manufacturing, Health & Wellness, Infrastructure, Telecom etc. continue to put out active openings and make up for the drop in numbers from the tech Sector," he added.

Other sectors like Retail, Goods & Logistics, BPO & Consumer Services and Automotives continue to contribute by adding more active openings. These sectors are expected to remain positive on their hiring action going into FY2024.

Jobs that are in demand

Active white-collar openings for freshers have recovered since the lows of September and October 2022.

"The current volume of active demand for freshers and entry level talent is in the 70,000 to 80,000 range. About 40% of this active demand is in the tech function and the rest spread across functions like Sales, BD, Marketing, Finance, Engineering, Customer Support, Operations and Administration," Karanth said. The active openings for freshers are spread across a wide range of sectors like Health & Wellness, Infrastructure, Telecom, Goods & Logistics, Retail and more. Depending on the sector and function, entry-level packages are largely in the ₹3- 6 lakh bracket.

"For FY24, it is estimated that the Indian IT sector will hire 350,000 to 400,000 employees, with a good mix of freshers and lateral hires. There will also be an increased demand for tech skills such as data analytics, data visualization, data science, full-stack development, and Cloud & DevOps, creating ample opportunities for talented individuals with relevant skills to find employment in India," Yeshab Giri said.

As far as fresher hiring is concerned, Randstad anticipates FY24 to display an uptick, especially in the IT sector. Entry-level salaries in this sector would range anywhere between ₹3.5 LPA and ₹7 LPA.

GREENBACK'S HEGEMONY

IS DOLLAR COLLAPSING? NO. IT'S DOOM FOR PETRODOLLAR

SUNITHA NATTI

THE latest fear gripping the global financial markets is the death of the dollar. But no, the mighty US dollar isn't collapsing or it's nowhere near the boneyard.

Rather, it's the petrodollar, which helped build the greenback's hegemony, that's under siege. Several countries including China, Russia, India, and Brazil are increasingly trading oil and energy in local currencies, ditching the dollar. If key countries like Saudi Arabia join, the collapse of the petrodollar first, and subsequently the dollar cannot be completely ruled out.

Interestingly, the dollar faced a similar fate around this time last decade, when the US and its closest ally Europe imposed oil sanctions on Iran in 2012. The very sanctions that intended to strengthen the dollar's world supremacy have sowed the seeds of self-collapse. Ten years later, the 2022 Russian oil sanctions seem to have firmly put the 'decline of the petrodollar' back into the spotlight. Consider a sample of deals struck recently.

If China and Brazil agreed to trade in respective currencies last week, this week saw a similar India-Malaysia pact. Last month, Chinese President Xi Jinping met Russian President Putin and renewed their decade-old deal to trade without dollars.

As it is, two-thirds of the bilateral trade between China and Russia is already being done using yuan and ruble. In February, Iraq and China agreed to trade using yuan, while China and France completed their first yuan-settled LNG trade, eliminating dollars for energy trades.

Among all, the biggest break will likely come from BRICS, which will decide on the membership of two major oil producing nations – Saudi Arabia and Iran -- this year. Incidentally, Saudi Arabia recently confirmed its willingness to trade in currencies alongside the dollar. This is huge because that's where the petrodollar was born.

In 1973, years after the gold standard was junked, US and Saudi Arabia agreed to accept only dollars for oil and to invest profits in US treasury bonds, notes and bills. And before we knew it, petrodollars spread beyond oil and to every facet of global trade becoming invincible. As on 2022, dollar accounts for about 50% of global trade and about 60% of global currency reserves, according to Bank of International Settlements. In contrast, the world's second largest economy China's currency yuan accounts for a piffling 2.7% each in both global trade and currency reserves. Which means, the much-feared de-dollarization is unlikely, though not impossible.

For over two decades, emerging economies have been making efforts to reduce dollar's reliance. The IMF too argued the need for a new global reserve currency. Whether that role will be filled by yuan, a BRICS currency or a basket of national currencies, countries are readying for a de-dollarized world.

SOURAV ROY

In 2012, the US and EU imposed sanctions on Iran's oil trade and the country was shut out of the global Swift payments system. Iran hit back halting shipments to Germany, Spain, Greece, Britain and France, which together bought some 18% of its oil. Though Tehran's official oil sales dipped, Iran used imaginative ways to sell and empty its oil tankers despite sanctions. Russia-China, and China-Japan began their ruble-renminbi, yuan-yen trade, while India bought Iranian oil with gold and rupees. A new agreement among Brics to use national currencies for trading was also floated.

Ten years later in 2022, similar events repeated with Russia at the centre. But this time, the hit to dollars' supremacy will be acute for two reasons. One, oil sales sans petrodollars is here to stay. Countries led by India and China have tasted the benefits of inexpensive trading in rupees and yuan without dollar as an intermediary.

Two, China, which has been harboring hopes of world dominance has gained heft compared to the last decade and is a now serious contender to dethrone the US. The US still remains the world's largest economy with $23 trillion GDP, but China is closing in fast at $17.7 trillion. Coincidentally, China owns the largest US currency reserves at $3.18 trillion. If it wants, China can simply offload just a fraction of the reserves to dent the dollar's strength.

All said, the world's biggest oil-trading partners China and Saudi Arabia still use the petrodollar and the crucial December 2022 meeting between both nations sparked enough speculation. Regardless of whether Saudi-China local currency trade deal materializes, Saudi Arabia's proposed BRICS membership, if it happens, will be a big blow and mark the beginning of the end of the petrodollar.

'Digital health tech to bring down healthcare cost'

VAITHEESWARAN B @ Chennai

SCALING up digital health technologies will bring down the cost of healthcare per individual and help provide targeted care, said Grace Lethlean, co-founder and chief product officer of ANDHealth, an Australian government-backed health-tech accelerator.

Speaking to this newspaper recently, she said there is a cost saving when it is provided for the masses. "Once you build a test, (price for) 10 people, it's the same for 10,000 people (or) 10 million people. You can get widespread screening and diagnostics done through digital health. And then you can just care for those who need care and be efficient." "We're going to see cheaper care, but not compromising on the quality," she added. ANDHealth, which supports evidence-based health technology, has helped start-ups raise $86 million and generated $34 million in revenue till now. Lethlean facilitates and mentors start-ups from ideation to building evidence and taking it to the market. She said there are good opportunities for digital diagnostics, medication adherence and helping patients manage lifestyle diseases like diabetes. Responding to a question, she said digital technologies could provide equitable and unbiased care for women, based on the data. "It's not looking at you and thinking, Oh, you're a woman, you're whining," she adds.

Lethlean emphasises financial support in developing, scaling and providing digital health tech to the masses and start-ups need to find a suitable business model.

"Start-ups should understand who's going to use it and who's going to pay for it as they're very different. Often the healthcare provider and the government will pay for you to use it at your home," she said.

'India more resilient than many economies'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

GLOBAL headwinds are likely to slow down India's GDP growth, but the country is more resilient than many large economies, HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh said on Saturday.

Speaking at SPJIMR's Centre for Family Business and Entrepreneurship event, Parekh said India has enough tailwinds with political stability, vaccine and food security, a domestic consumption-based economy, digitisation initiatives and a robust regulatory system for financial sector. "India is not immune to the global shocks but has proved to be more resilient than many large economies. India's GDP growth will slow down due to global headwinds," he said. For start-ups, he said, "many investors still have plenty of dry powder for good, innovative ideas, but the days of cash burn and high valuations are behind us".

Gas firms cut CNG price by ₹8 a kg, PNG 5 per scm

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

AS the government fixed natural gas price at $6.5 per mmBtu on Friday for April 2023 under the new pricing formula, distribution companies have started reducing the price of CNG and PNG.

Companies such as Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL), Adani Total Gas Ltd (ATGL), and Torrent Gas have announced a substantial reduction in price of compressed natural gas (CNG), which is used as transport fuel and piped natural gas (PNG), used for domestic purposes. According to the price notification, Adani total gas, which supplies gas in Gujarat, cut price up to ₹8.13/kg on CNG and ₹5.06/scm on PNG. It also reduced PNG prices for its industrial and commercial consumers by ₹3.0/scm in its Geographical Areas (GAs). Similarly, Mahanagar Gas Limited (MGL), announced reduction of CNG price by ₹8 per kg to ₹79 per kg and PNG price by ₹5/scm to ₹49/scm.

Torrent Gas, which supplies in 34 districts across the country including the cities of Chennai and Jaipur, today announced slashing price up to ₹8.25 per Kg on CNG and ₹5 per SCM on PNG. Meanwhile, the CNG and PNG prices were cut by up to ₹6 by Indraprastha Gas in Delhi

The move comes after the government revised gas pricing formula on Thursday that came into effect from Saturday (April 8, 2023). As per the new pricing norms, gas price will be determined based on the previous months' average crude price basket, but with a floor and ceiling price of $4/mmBtu and $6.5/mmBtu, respectively. On Friday (7 April 2023), the petroleum ministry announced the natural gas price of $7.92 per unit for April 2023, but as per new price formula, the same was capped at $6.5 per unit. Subsequently, the gas companies have started reducing CNG and PNG prices in the country. "It is enhancing the affordability of PNG and CNG with a saving of over 40% for CNG consumers as compared to petrol prices and around 15% for home PNG consumers as compared to LPG prices," said Adani Total Gas in a statement.

The government said the purpose of the new pricing norm will increase share of natural gas in energy mix from current 6.5% to 15% by 2030. It believes the reforms will help expand the consumption of natural gas and contribute to achieve target of emission reduction.

EXPRESS READ

Sitharaman to embark on official visit to US

NEW DELHI: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman will embark on an official visit to the US beginning April 10. During the visit, she will attend 2023 Spring Meetings of World Bank Group (WBG) and the IMF, along with G20 meetings, among other events, from April 10 to April 16. *ENS*

REC raises $750 million via green bonds

NEW DELHI: State-owned non-banking finance firm REC Ltd on Saturday said it has raised $750 million (about ₹6,138 crore) through issuance of green bonds. The net proceeds from the issue of the bonds will be applied to finance, in whole or in part, green projects. *PTI*

CMD addresses employees on IREDA's historical performance in FY23

Pradip Kumar Das, Chairman & Managing Director, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) addressed all employees through Virtual platform today on the company's achievements during FY 2022-23 and laid out ambitious targets for fiscal year 2023-24. He highlighted the significant milestones achieved by the company and emphasized the need to continue the momentum to achieve more challenging goals.

Business & Beyond

Goutom Chakraborty takes over as chief executive officer of GAIL Gas

Noida: Goutam Chakraborty has taken over as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of GAIL Gas Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of GAIL (India) Limited, engaged in the City Gas Distribution business He has taken over the charge from Raman Chadha. Prior to this assignment, Shri Chakraborty was serving as Executive Director for City Gas Distribution (CGD) Business Vertical in parent company GAIL (India) Limited.

60th National Maritime Day was celebrated at PPA

60th National Maritime Day was celebrated at PPA in the Wet Basin of the PPA's Marine Site office, where, Shri A.K. Bose, Ex-Dy. Chairman, PPA graced the occasion as Chief Guest. At the meeting, Shri Bose spoke about the rich Maritime Heritage of the Nation in ancient times. The state of Odisha also has a rich Maritime History which reflected by celebration of Port Day on the auspicious occasion of Kartika Purnima.

SJVN sets new record, achieves CAPEX of `8,240 crore in FY 2022-23

Nand Lal Sharma, Chairman & Managing Director, SJVN informed that SJVN has successfully achieved its ambitious Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) target for fiscal year 2022-23. With ₹8,240 crore, the company has surpassed the target of ₹ 8,000 crores assigned by Ministry of Power, Govt. of India. Nand Lal Sharma said that under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi and guidance of Hon'ble Union Power Minister R. K Singh, SJVN has achieved this target to contribute in economic and infrastructural growth of the nation.

Jubilation marks 32nd Foundation Day at MCL

Sambalpur: Mahanadi Coalfields (MCL) on Monday celebrated its 32nd Foundation Day with fervour, celebrating a momentous performance during the last financial year. A series of events were organised at its headquarters, beginning with a "Run For Excellence", in which functional directors, former CMD, employees and their family members attended.

Tejaswin clinches decathlon silver in US

Commonwealth Games medallist high jumper Tejaswin Shankar bagged a decathlon silver and came close to breaking the national record at the Jim Click Shootout competition in Arizona, USA. Tejaswin competed in the gruelling 10-event decathlon and scored a cumulative 7,648 points — 10 less than Bharatinder Singh's national record of 7,658 set in 2011.

More than two decades have passed since former South African captain, Hansie Cronje, lost his life in a plane crash. After falling out of love with the game, the family is involved in the sport again, with his sister, Hester Parsons, coaching age-group sides in her school. In an emotional interview with **Gomesh S**, who went to their house in Potchefstroom, Hester opens up about her brother...

LIFE AFTER HANSIE

"SHE is going to cry you know," says Gordon Parsons, pointing to his wife Hester on a hot Monday afternoon at The Daily Coffee Café in Potchefstroom. "No, I'm not... I'm not going to cry today," responds Hester with a resolute smile as she sips her *cappuccino*.

It was less than 24 hours since South Africa played their first-ever senior cricket World Cup final. This conversation started with that historic evening in Cape Town before drifting off in various directions, including the U-19 Women's T20 World Cup that happened in the town. But every turn invariably turned to one point — a topic hard to avoid with them — that of Hester's brother. Former South African captain Hansie Cronje, a leader who united a nation soon after apartheid.

The Bloemfontein-born man was the central figure of South African sport in the 1990s. He was the one the Rainbow Nation looked up to and rallied behind. The masterful tactician who wielded his wand to create magic on the cricket field, the most successful ODI captain for South Africa (win %), third-most successful in the world (minimum 40 games), most consecutive ODIs as captain... this list of accomplishments goes on. He was the icon for a country trying to rebuild its identity in the post-apartheid era.

He was the one who led them into the new millennium. Until it all came crashing down like a pack of cards. A match-fixing scandal, followed by a life ban after his confession — where he admitted accepting money from bookmakers — at the King Commission in 2000. It came as a shock to not just Hansie's family, but the entire cricketing world. A little over two years later, he would lose his life in a plane crash.

Two decades have passed since Hester's family lost Hansie. And yet, there isn't a day that goes by without a conversation about him in the Parsons' household. "Ask my family. My daughter is going to tell you, 'two things you don't fight with mum; one, the Grey College, the school Hansie went to, and Hansie'," Hester breaks into laughter in the drawing room of their house.

Behind her is a wall that is decorated with pictures of her brother. In fact, it is impossible to turn your eye in a direction where there isn't a Hansie footprint. The garage, the living room, everywhere you go, they are filled with cricketing memories of Gordon and Hansie, especially the latter. From backyard cricket to Orange Free State to the South African team, there isn't much that hasn't been chronicled. It could easily be mistaken as a shrine of South Africa's once-beloved sporting hero.

> **Even though cricket was his downfall in the end, I want to change lives through cricket and help people experience what he experienced (in the sport). For, I think he lived a full life because of cricket.**
>
> Hester, Hansie's sister

Born only 13 months after brother, Hester is as close to a twin sibling as one could get. Admittedly, she was extremely close with her brother growing up and took the longest to move on with her life after his demise. Her eyes well up, just as Gordon had suggested, as she opens up about their family's grief. "I think people take different amounts of time to get over things. I took longer than the rest of my family as you can see," she smiles, fighting back tears. "I don't think I will ever get over it. My mum always says, 'your mind tells you that your child is going to bury you, you are the older one.' So, I do not want to know what it is like to bury a child. It is hard. We did a lot together. We were close, sorry (wipes her tears). To get closure, yes, they say time heals, but I don't think a day goes by where I don't talk about him or think about him," she says.

Sunday Special

Hester and Gordon have been running a cricket academy — Dragons Junior Cricket Academy — for over 20 years now, with the former also working as a teacher at Potchefstroom Central School. However, for the longest time after her brother's demise, Hester and the entire family distanced themselves from the sport.

For a household where cricket was a mandatory topic of discussion at the dinner table, it was unthinkable. For them, the sport was a sore reminder that their son was no longer with them. Cricket was supposed to keep people out of trouble but for Cronje's family, it was the root cause. Hester, who had spent her entire childhood bowling and fielding to Hansie and her other brother, Frans, could not bring herself to watch cricket after the former's passing. It was only when she was thrown into the deep end at the school where she was working (she had no choice but to coach the age-group cricket teams), that Hester got involved in the sport again.

(Clockwise) Hester Parsons, sister of Hansie Cronje, at his tomb. Cronje's family picture. Hansie during his playing days. Hester with her brothers Hansie and Frans and mother during their childhood | SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT/AFP

Teaching young students about sport, building their love for it and creating a bond with them outside the classroom, that is where Hester's true passion for the game blossomed. When Gordon and she started the academy 21 years ago, the purpose was to ensure that children who could not afford private coaching were involved in the sport. For them, it was a chance to give back. What started with 93 students in the first year has blossomed into a vibrant community with the academy now housing close to 160 budding cricketers, with the majority of them being girls. Their son, James, and daughter, Alexandrea, too, are certified level 2 coaches. Cricket, once again, has taken over their lives.

Measuring or understanding the legacy of an athlete, especially someone like Hansie, who had a decade of glory before the allegations, accusations and confession, can be tricky. While his name stirs mixed feelings for many cricket fans in South Africa, it does seem like the emotions have changed or rather mellowed down a bit with time. Hansie represents different things to different people; a fallen super star, a story of what could have been, a flawed hero who was human and so on.

Ask Hester what her brother's legacy is and she has a straight answer. "I think, to everybody it would mean something different. To my son, it would mean something different, to my daughter, to me, what it is to my husband, especially my mum.

What is it for me? Even though cricket was his downfall in the end, I want to change lives through cricket and help people experience what he experienced (in the sport). For, I think he lived a full life because of cricket."

It is incredible how cricket and Cronje's family are inseparable even after everything they have been through. Bertha, Hansie's wife, who remarried Jacques du Plessis and has a family of her own in George (a city in the Western Cape province), has two teenage sons who love playing cricket as well. "She has been amazing. See, now I am getting teared up, she is an unbelievable person. She remarried to a wonderful guy and has two wonderful children and good sportsmen. They know about him and the history, which I think is wonderful and has kept in so much part of their lives. You forget that they are not Hansie's children, they have a close relationship with my mum. We keep in touch, still close, it is largely due to the type of person she is as well. Hansie and she were married for seven years, it sounds short but it is a long time. It just shows you how life happens, it happens so quickly just when he was busy getting his life back together, he passed away," says Hester.

Through the conversation, Hester had to not only navigate her emotions but also the menagerie she nurtures at home. The list comprises 12 cats and two kittens, 28 rabbits, seven birds, two tanks with tropical fish, two chinchillas, a corn snake, a tortoise, and her daughter's two English bulldogs. While she grew up in a household with a lot of pets, she pauses when asked if it has become a coping mechanism over the years. "It is healing," she says after a minute. "There is nothing like the care you give to the animal and the satisfaction that you get. The little kitten we took in was almost dead. I think it is healing, we live in a society where people are getting more and more self-centred. In school, I teach the children to care for others. I got fish in my classroom, it is amazing to see the love children develop for animals. I think they teach us a lot. So to me, you can see excessively, not an obsession, but animals play a big part in my life."

In 2021, Netflix released a documentary called 'Bad Sport' in which the episode 'The Fallen Idol' tracked Hansie's journey to the top and his fall after. The episode featured Hester, Frans, Bertha, Dr. Ali Bacher (the then CEO of United Cricket Board of South Africa), Marlon Aronstam (the bookmaker), several former South African cricketers and journalists who were closely involved in the aftermath of Delhi Police's unearthed audio recordings featuring the former South African captain. To relive the whole thing after two decades for the documentary was a "healing process" for Hester.

"I took the longest to forgive people. It was really nice when I eventually saw Dr. Ali Bacher. We went for a coffee and talked. I always had respect for him. He actually came last year to speak at the University and I saw him. I still hang on to every word he says, he is an incredible man. To me what had happened was unfortunate. You still read things in the press and 20,000 good comments and I would hammer on the one negative. It is funny how the human brain works, you are just tuned in on that and then, I immediately want to defend him, he is not here to defend himself.

"In the documentary, I still learn things from it. I mean you listen to the bookmaker (Marlon) being interviewed. He himself says he should never have been allowed to get so close to Hansie like he did. You see, now I get angry. Why didn't you protect him (Hansie)? It happens, but that should not have been allowed. So, you sort of feel protective, he himself said he was surprised and he (Marlon) phoned the office number and they just gave it. In hindsight, those things should not have happened. Yes, lessons were learnt, I don't think it happens anymore. So, good has come from it. If it could change something and help somebody, it was worth it," says Hester, trying to hold back her emotions. The tears come still just as Gordon had said a couple of hours before.

Boxers Shiva, Deepak to lead Indian squad in World C'ships

AGENCIES @ New Delhi

SIX-TIME Asian Championships medallist Shiva Thapa and 2019 Asian Championships silver medallist Deepak Bhoria will headline the Indian squad for the upcoming men's World Boxing Championships to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from April 30 to May 14.

Shiva, who won a World Championships bronze in Doha in 2015, will be looking to add another medal to his name. He will be representing the country in the 63.5kg category. Deepak will be carrying the country's hopes in the 51kg flyweight category. The Indian team will leave for Tashkent on April 17 as they will attend a multi-nation training camp before the World Championships.

The Championships will also feature seven defending world champions including Sofiane Oumiha from France, Japan's Tomoya Tsuboi and Sewonrets Okazawa, Loren Alfonso from Azerbaijan, Saken Bibossinov from Kazakhstan and Cuba's Yoenlis Hernandez Martinez and Julio La Cruz. **Squad:** Govind Sahani (48kg), Deepak Bhoria (51kg), Sachin Siwach (54kg), Mohammad Hussamuddin (57kg), Varinder Singh (60kg), Shiva Thapa (63.5kg), Akash Sangwan (67kg), Nishant Dev (71kg), Sumit Kundu (75kg), Ashish Chaudhary (80kg), Harsh Choudhary (86kg), Naveen Kumar (92kg) and Narender Berwal (92+kg).

Good day at office for Chennai Super Kings

ENS/AGENCIES @ Chennai/Guwahati

CHENNAI Super Kings put up a tidy show to beat Mumbai Indians by seven wickets and 11 balls to spare in the Indian Premier League on Saturday.

Electing to field first, CSK bowers, especially spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Mitchell Santer, did very well to restrict Mumbai to 157/8. Ishan Kishan (32) started off on a bright note before being dismissed by Jadeja. From thereon, MI batters could never get going as Jadeja and Santer dominated the proceedings.

In reply, CSK lost a wicket in the first over itself with Devon Conway losing his stumps against Jason Behrendorff. But Ajinkya Rahane, who was making his first appearance for the season, turned the tide in Chennai's favour. His 27-ball 61 handed a solid platform for the visiting team. Opener Ruturaj Gaikwad (40 n.o) played a watchful innings to guide the team home.

Ravindra Jadeja was the pick of the bowlers for CSK against MI on Saturday | SPORTZPICS

Brief scores: Mumbai Indians 157/8 in 20 ovs (Ishan 32, David 31; Jadeja 3/20, Santer 2/28, Tushar 2/31) **lost to** Chennai Super Kings 159/3 in 18.1 ovs (Rahane 61, Gaikwad 40 n.o).

Another loss for DC

Earlier in the first match, Delhi Capitals' 'Summer of Horrors' continued as they crashed to a 57-run loss against Rajasthan Royals, completing a hat-trick of one-sided defeats in this edition of IPL. While Yashasvi Jaiswal reaffirmed his status as the brightest talent among India's gen-next batters with a superb 60, Jos Buttler showed no signs of finger pain en route a chiselled 79 in Rajasthan Royals' challenging 199 for 4 after David Warner committed a tactical 'harakiri' by opting to field on a batting wicket.

Warner couldn't be blamed as his pencil-thin Indian batting unit was put on its haunches as they managed only 142 for 9 in the end after being out-batted by the two Royals openers with Shimron Hetmyer adding a bit of icing on the cake.

Brief scores: Rajasthan Royals 199/4 in 20 ovs (Buttler 79, Buttler 60) **bt** Delhi Capitals 142/9 in 20 ovs (Warner 65; Chahal 3/27, Boult 3/29).

Tushar learning death bowling on the job

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @ Chennai

IT is a dream of every budding cricketer in the country to be coached or mentored by the best in the business. At the domestic level, only few teams can afford to hire the best coaches in the country or from abroad. But the IPL is a different ball game. The dynamics scale and platform is so high that franchises vie with each other to hire the best coaches in the business for their team.

Tushar Deshpande, who made his IPL debut for Delhi Capital in 2020, has so far played in nine IPL games and taken seven wickets (till LSG game) is learning the ropes of T20 game with the Chennai Super Kings coaches Stephen Fleming, Eric Simons and Dwayne Bravo while on the job. After a poor spell initially, Deshpande bounced back against Lucknow Super Giants at Chennai to pick 2/45, accounting for Nicholas Pooran and Ayush Badoni — both coming at crucial stages of the match. However, the Mumbai-based pacer was the talking point for having conceded too many extras (wides, no-balls). However, Deshpande is keen to move on and not worry what happened in the last few games.

The pacer, who became IPL's first 'impact player' during the tournament opener against Gujarat Titans, said that he is still learning the art of 'death bowling' and is trying to pick the brains of CSK's bowling coach Bravo. "Bowling in the death is not an easy skill. I am still learning, we have a great death bowler in our bowling coach DJ Bravo and I am just trying to pick his brains. My role is quite similar to what Bravo has done over the years for CSK. I can't fill his shoes but I am trying to learn slog-overs bowling skills from him."

GT, PBKS SEEK THREE WINS IN THREE

Holders Gujarat Titans, seeking a hat-trick of wins, face a Kolkata side who were inspired by Shardul Thakur in their last outing. In Sunday's other match, the only other team with a 100 % record, Punjab Kings, square off against Sunrisers Hyderabad. A look...

TITANS, THE TEAM WITH THE MIDAS TOUCH

Right now, whatever Gujarat touches turns to the rarest form of platinum. Impact Players, mid-match calls, tricky chases... they can do no wrong. It's why they start favourites against a Kolkata side whose belief will be sky high after Shardul Thakur injection of electricity and Varun Chakravarthy's brand of mystery spin collapsed Bangalore.

GT vs KKR, 3.30 PM, Ahmedabad

OUT OF SORTS HYDERABAD NEED MULTIPLE SOLUTIONS

After the auction was done, it was declared that Hyderabad had won the auction. Some stellar signings and a well rounded, balanced team was the verdict. However, none of their big signings, led by Harry Brook, are yet to get going. They will need them against Punjab Kings who have gotten off to a solid start without two of their biggest performers, Kagiso Rabada and Liam Livingstone.

SRH vs PBKS, 7.30 PM, Hyderabad

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS AND JIO CINEMA

EXPRESS READ

Priyanshu cruises to Orleans Masters final

ORLEANS: India's Priyanshu Rajawat stormed into the finals of the Orleans Masters Super 300 badminton tournament with a straight game demolition of Ireland's Nhat Nguyen in the semifinals on Saturday. The 21-year-old dished out an attacking game to outplay the World No 35 Nguyen 21-12, 21-9 in a men's singles semifinals to progress to his maiden final of a super 300 world tour event.

Son becomes first Asian to score 100 PL goals

LONDON: South Korea star Son Heung-min became the first Asian to score 100 times in the EPL during Tottenham's 2-1 win against Brighton. Son reached his century with a curling finish to put Spurs ahead. Later, Man City beat Southampton 4-1 to close gap on league leaders Arsenal.

Results: Aston Villa **2-0** Forest; Brentford **1-2** Newcastle; Fulham **0-1** West Ham; Leicester 0-1 Bournemouth; Man United **2-0** Everton; Tottenham **2-1** Brighton; Wolves **1-0** Chelsea.

Sidharth knocks out Ramkumar in semis

CHENNAI: Fourth-seeded Sidharth Rawat upset No.2 seed Ramanathan Ramkumar 6-3, 6-1 in the singles semifinal of the BR Adithyan Memorial ITF men's Futures tennis tournament at Gandhi Nagar Club here on Saturday. Rawat will meet compatriot Digvijay Pratap Singh, the No.3 seed, in the final on Sunday. Singh defeated seventh-seeded Manish Sureshkumar 6-4, 6-4 in the other semifinal.

Coal miners in Ukraine dig deep to power nation

Moscow crippling N-power stations has made energy independency Kyiv's priority

ENERGY

DNIPROPETROVSK OBLAST: Deep underground in south-eastern Ukraine, miners work around the clock extracting coal to power the country's war effort and to provide civilians with light and heat.

Coal is central to meeting Ukraine's energy needs following Russia's military's 6-month campaign to destroy power stations and other infrastructure, the chief engineer of a mining company in Dnipropetrovsk province said.

Elevators carry the company's workers underground to the depths of the mine. From there, they operate heavy machinery that digs out the coal and moves the precious resource above ground. It is hard work, the miners said, but essential to keep the country going.

"Today, the country's energy independence is more than a priority," said Oleksandr, the chief engineer, who, like all the coal miners interviewed, spoke on the condition of giving only his first name for security reasons. Russia's attacks on Ukraine's nuclear, thermal and other power stations continue to disrupt electricity service as the war grinds on for a second year.

Negotiations to demilitarise the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which the Kremlin's forces captured last year at the start of the full-scale invasion, are at an impasse. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy opposes any proposal that would legitimise Russian control of the plant, which is Europe's largest nuclear energy facility. At full capacity, the plant can produce 6,000 megawatts of electricity. The Ukrainian operators of the plant shut down the last reactor in September, saying it was too risky to run while Russia bombarded nearby areas.

Shelling has damaged the plant numerous times, raising fears of a possible nuclear meltdown. Russian missiles have also threatened the power lines needed to operate vital cooling equipment at Zaporizhzhia and Ukraine's other nuclear plants.

Before the war, the Ukrainian government planned to reduce the country's reliance on coal-fired power stations, which contribute to global warming, and to increase nuclear energy and natural gas production. But when Russian attacks damaged thermal plants in the middle of winter, it was coal that helped keep Ukrainian homes warm, Oleksandr said. The work of the coal miners cannot fully compensate for the loss of energy from nuclear power plants, but every megawatt they had a role in generating reduced gaps.

"We come and work with optimism, trying not to think about what is going on outside the mine," a miner said.

EXFILE • CULTURE

Guatemala Holy Week unfolds under new UNESCO heritage status

Thousands of Guatemalan worshippers funnel slowly through the streets of Antigua carrying images of Jesus over a multicoloured carpet of flowers and scented sawdust as somber music rings out

Catholic devotees take part in a Holy Burial procession during Good Friday

UNESCO HERITAGE STATUS

Guatemala's Holy Week celebrations, which mix Mayan rituals with Catholic religious fervour, were given UNESCO heritage status in November, bringing special meaning to this year's Good Friday processions being carried out across the country

A VERY SPECIAL FESTIVAL

"For us it is cause for great joy and is a very special day to participate in this offering, especially now," lawyer Roberto Matheu said, referring to the new UNESCO recognition

SPANNING OVER SIX WEEKS

Despite its name, Guatemala's Holy Week festival actually stretches over six weeks, reaching a fever pitch at Easter as the Central American country is transformed by extravagant processions, vigils, and the laying of brightly coloured carpets throughout the streets

A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE

Guatemalans "experience Holy Week differently to the rest of the world," said Culture Minister Felipe Aguilar

CULTURAL FUSION

Guatemala's customs, music, food and art are the result of a "cultural fusion" between the Catholicism of Spanish conquistadores and the ancestral beliefs of the Indigenous Mayan population, he said

PEOPLE FLOCK TO STREETS

Thousands of faithful and tourists have flooded the streets of Antigua, the colonial capital, since Thursday to take part in the processions

Guatemala's Holy week fuses colonial heritage and Mayan tradition

JESUS OF HUMILITY PROCESSION

This tourist town, some 40 kilometres southwest of the capital Guatemala City, is known for its Jesus of Humility procession marking the final part of his life, with some faithful dressed as Roman soldiers

"The Jesus of Humility has always blessed us... we don't want to lose this tradition that identifies us as Guatemalans," Jose Perez, 44, a restaurant cook, said

MAYAN NEIGHBORHOODS

In Mayan neighborhoods, locals wearing traditional outfits take turns carrying images of their saints through the streets

AMALGAMATING CULTURES

Spanish colonisers brought Holy Week celebrations to Guatemala in the 16th century but the local Mayan population soon syncretized it with their own traditions and worldview

Guatemalans prepare typical colonial dishes, such as dried fish, pickled vegetables and sweet preserves

CRAWLERS

In the northwestern San Andres Sajcabaja municipality, home to indigenous people from the Mayan K'che' ethnicity, around 15 devotees crawl on hands and knees some five kilometers through the streets to mark the Passion of Jesus, the short painful period before his death

FACT OF THE MATTER

Ice storm leaves many in the dark

WEATHER

Hundreds of thousands of people remained without power on Friday in eastern Canada two days after a storm left parts of Quebec and Ontario coated in ice, causing tree limbs to break and fall on power lines, The vast majority of the active outages were reported in Quebec. In Saint-Joseph-Du-Lac, Quebec, police Inspector Jean Philippe Labbé said a woman found her husband unconscious in the garage where he was running a generator. Labbé said the 75-year-old died after being taken to hospital. Montreal's health authority said dozens of people suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning after using outdoor appliances inside during the blackout.

Next total solar eclipse in the US

SPACE

It's only a year until a total solar eclipse sweeps across North America. On April 8, 2024, the moon will cast its shadow across a stretch of the US, Mexico and Canada, plunging millions of people into midday darkness. It's been less than six years since a total solar eclipse cut across the US, from coast to coast. That was on August 21, 2017. If you miss next year's spectacle, you'll have to wait 20 years until the next one. But that total eclipse will only be visible in Montana and the Dakotas. Next year's eclipse will slice a diagonal line across North America on April 8. It will start in the Pacific and first reach land over Mexico around 11:07 am local time, NASA predicts.

1st Native American poet laureate

LITERATURE

North Dakota lawmakers have appointed an Ojibwe woman as the state's poet laureate, making her the first Native American to hold this position in the state and increasing attention to her expertise on the troubled history of Native American boarding schools. Denise Lajimodiere, a citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band in Belcourt, has written several award-winning books of poetry. She's considered a national expert on the history of Native American boarding schools and wrote an academic book called *"Stringing Rosaries"* in 2019 on the atrocities experienced by boarding school survivors. "I'm honoured and humbled to represent my tribe. They are and always will be my inspiration," Lajimodiere said, following a bipartisan confirmation of her two-year term. Poet laureates represent state in inaugural speeches, commencements, poetry readings and educational events.

Bid to expel lawmakers over gun control

LAW

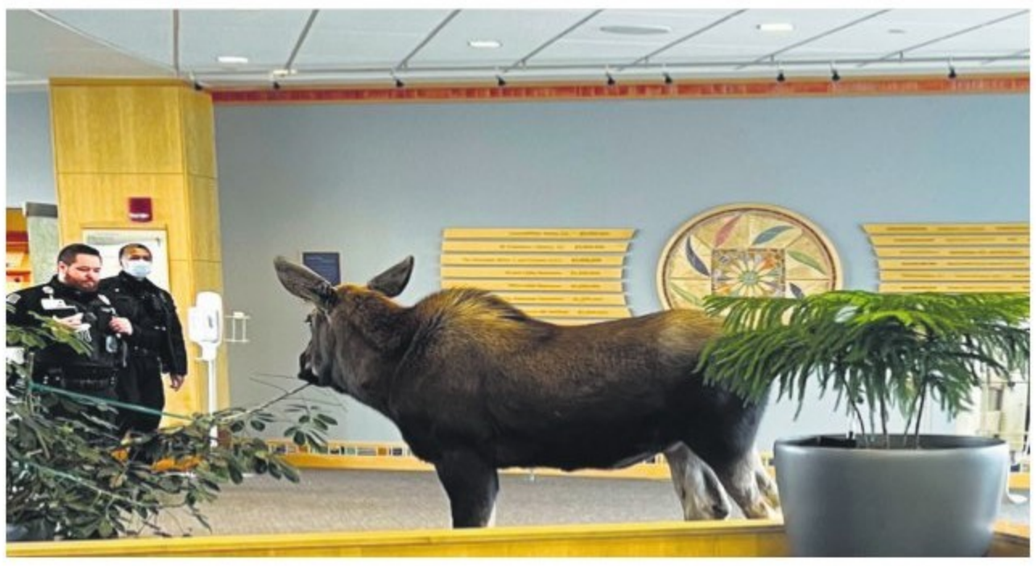
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on Friday showered attention on three Tennessee officials targeted for expulsion from the state legislature over their support for gun control, as the fracas escalated into a major national row over race and representation.

Biden spoke via phone with the "Tennessee Three" and "thanked them for their leadership in seeking to ban assault weapons," a White House statement said. Biden invited the three to the White House "in the near future," it added. The Republican-led Tennessee House of Representatives expelled two Black lawmakers on Thursday after they disrupted an assembly session to demand stricter gun controls in the wake of a deadly mass shooting at an elementary school. A third white legislator who joined their protest was not removed.

Accusations of racism have reverberated around the case, and sparked anger among Democrats well beyond Tennessee.

On March 30, just days after a shooting rampage at a school killed six people, legislators Justin Jones, Justin Pearson and Gloria Johnson joined protesters on the state House floor to challenge lawmakers to favour stricter gun control.

Jones and Pearson used a bullhorn to shout "Gun control now" and "Power to the people" while rallying protesters in the galleries.



MOOSE'S TRIP TO THE HOSPITAL

A moose stands inside a Providence Alaska Health Park medical building in Alaska. The moose chomped on plants in lobby | AP

Officials in China lash out at WHO, defend virus search

HEALTH

BEIJING: Chinese health officials defended their search for the source of the Covid-19 virus and lashed out on Saturday at the World Health Organisation after its leader said Beijing should have shared genetic information earlier.

The WHO comments were "offensive and disrespectful," said the director of the China Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Shen Hongbing. He accused the WHO of "attempting to smear China" and said it should avoid helping others "politicise Covid-19."

The global health body's director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said on March 17 that newly disclosed genetic material gathered in Wuhan in central China, where the first cases were detected in late 2019, "should have been shared three years ago."

"As a responsible country and as scientists, we have always actively shared research results with scientists from around the world," Shen said at a news conference.

The origins of Covid-19 are still debated and the focus of bitter political dispute.

Shen Hongbing, director of Chinese Center for Disease Control & Prevention

Many scientists believe it jumped from animals to humans at a market in Wuhan, but the city also is home to laboratories including China's top facility for collecting viruses. That prompted suggestions Covid-19 might have leaked from one. The ruling Communist Party has tried to deflect criticism of its handling of the outbreak by spreading uncertainty about its origins.

Officials have repeated anti-US conspiracy theories that the virus was created by Washington and smuggled into China.

STOLEN CHILDHOOD

Eldest daughter syndrome and how it effects one's wellbeing

PSYCHOLOGY

HAVE you heard of "eldest daughter syndrome"? It's the emotional burden eldest daughters tend to take on (and are encouraged to take on) in many families from a young age.

From caring for younger siblings, helping out with everyday chores, looking after sick parents to sorting shopping, eldest daughters often shoulder a heavy but invisible burden of domestic responsibility from a young age.

But *#EldestDaughterSyndrome* is now trending on TikTok, with adolescent girls speaking out about the unfair amount of unpaid and unappreciated labour they do in their families, as well as discussing its adverse effects on their lives, health and wellbeing.

Despite women's rise in education and employment, they still shoulder the lion's share of housework.

Indeed, progress towards gender equality in the workplace has not translated into gender equality at home. And

eldest daughter syndrome can go some way to explain why this is the case.

Research shows that children make a notable but often overlooked contribution to domestic labour. Mirroring the gender divide among adults, girls between five and 14 years old spend 40% more time on domestic work than boys.

Following a patriarchal pecking order, the eldest daughter often bears the brunt of the burden among her siblings.

As voiced by many the syndrome can impair eldest daughters' wellbeing and "steal" their childhood as they are rushed into assuming a disproportionate amount of adult responsibilities—also known as parentification. At least three behavioural theories underlie eldest daughter syndrome.

First, the role modelling theory, which suggests that eldest daughters often follow their mother as a role model in learning to "do" gender.

Second, the sex-typing theory proposes that parents often assign different, gendered tasks to girls and boys.

And third, the labour substitution theory suggests that when working mothers have limited time available for domestic work, eldest daughters often act as "substitutes".